■ SAT SPECIAL / A3-2

The mom behind the man: Paolo Bediones and Boots Marcos Barba

■ NEWS / A2

BIR chief in hot water: P10-B short of collection target

■ NEWS /A4

Vandalized oil pipeline in Nigeria explodes; up to 200 killed

■ METRO / A19

17 inmates escape Manila police station; 6 recaptured

OFWs' role in Saudi progress behind mass pardon by king

By Jerome Aning

THE FREEING OF NEARLY 200 OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers jailed in Saudi Arabia was the Saudi government's way of acknowledging the contributions of OFWs to the oil-rich kingdom's economic development in the past few decades, according to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

"We've been told by Saudi officials that this

OFWs' ROLE/ A10

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, May 13, 2006 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 154 P18 website: www.inq7.net

GMA orders 'thorough' probe of leftists' killing

By Norman Bordadora and Luige A. del Puerto

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WANTS A "thorough" investigation of the Wednesday night murder of two Bayan Muna members in Echague, Isabela, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"[W]e assure the public that this government will not tolerate any form of vigilantism that runs

GMA ORDERS/ A4

Batasan 5 charged again

DOJ keeps rejected rebellion case alive

By Tarra V. Quismundo

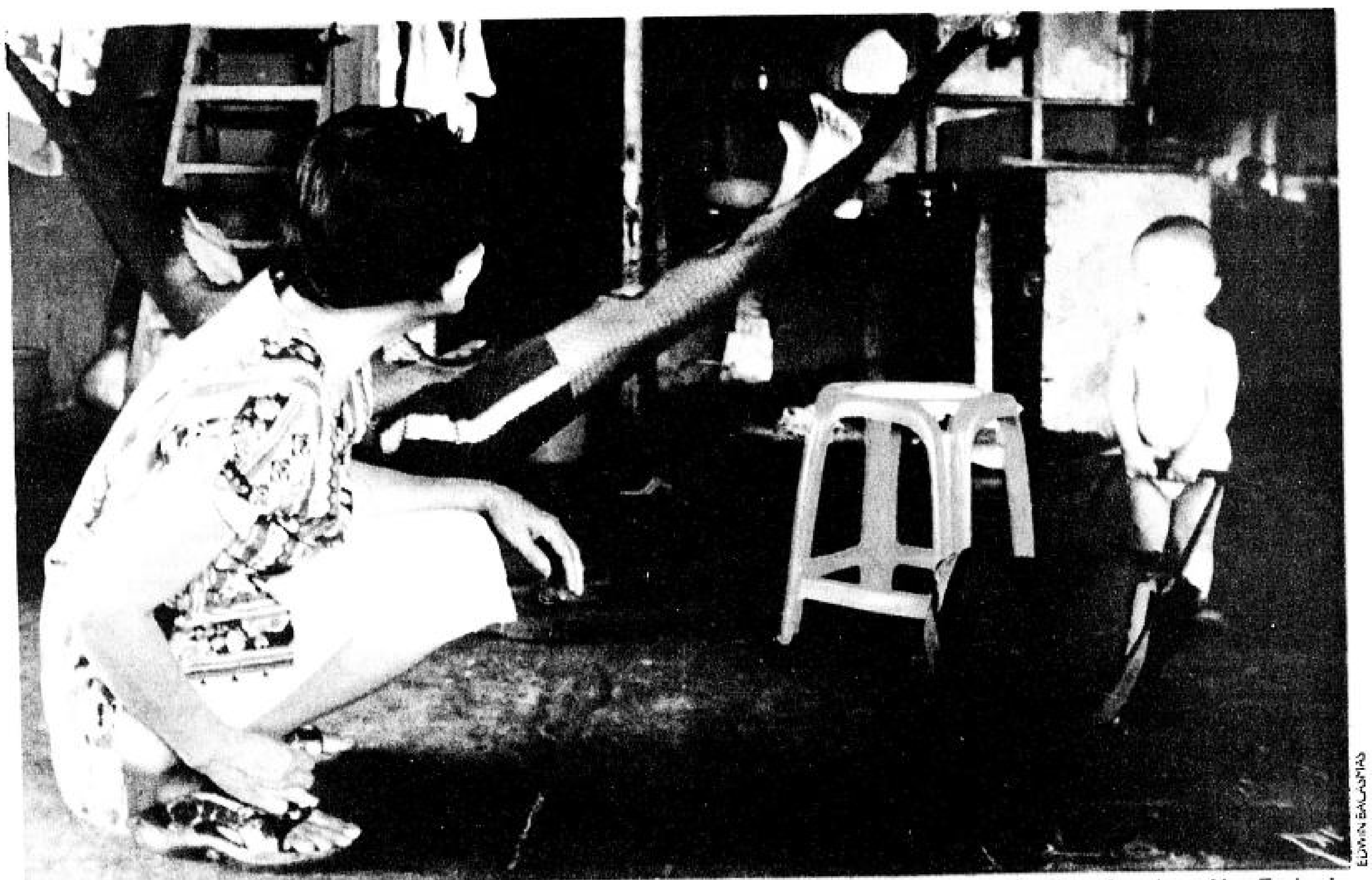
ONE WEEK AFTER BEING REBUFFED BY A Makati judge, the Department of Justice yesterday filed new rebellion charges against the "Batasan 5" lawmakers, former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and 40 others.

They were accused of conspiring in a failed plot to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo using an assault force of rebel soldiers and communist guerrillas.

The recast information filed before the Makati Regional Trial Court named party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza of Gabriela as among the supposed masterminds of the plot which was to have culminated on May 1—"their D-Day."

The DOJ prosecutors branded as "legal fronts" of the Communist Party of the Philippines several legal organizations which have taken part in street protests de-

BATASAN/ A4



EDWIN BAGASMAS

FROM A TO Z: Story of Sally Ruiz and her adopted son Sandin Lee that appeared in the INQUIRER moved readers from America to New Zealand.

Villar still confident Drilon's a gentleman

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and TJ Burgonio

AMID RENEWED SPECULATIONS on a Senate leadership shake-up, Sen. Manuel Villar, the virtual Senate President-in-waiting, has stubbornly stuck to his oft-repeated line that he trusts Senate President Franklin Drilon will honor "our gentleman's agreement."

Under the terms of a term-sharing arrangement that the two struck when they battled each other to a stalemate for the post in 2004, Villar expects to take over as Senate President when the 13th Congress opens its third regular session on July 24.

At least that is how Villar confidently had it when the INQUIRER caught up with him on the phone yesterday.

But a senator close to Villar has suggested Villar might challenge Drilon's leadership before July, possibly as early as when

VILLAR/ A8

World now reaches out to unwanted boy

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE STORY OF THE BABY BOY unwanted by his mother, published by the INQUIRER on Thursday, has touched the hearts of Filipinos here and abroad.

Sandin Lee Ruiz would not have been born had Salvacion "Sally" Ruiz, a former housemaid, not offered to adopt him two months before he was due on October 2004.

His biological mother, then 18, had wanted to abort the pregnancy.

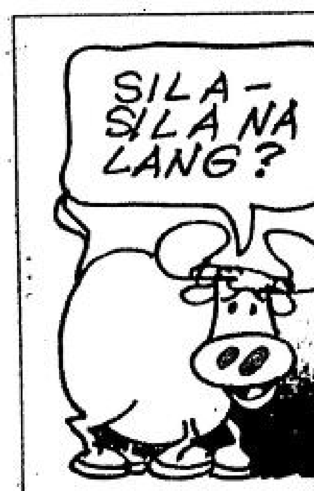
By the afternoon of Thursday, the INQUIRER had received e-mails and phone calls from readers here and as far away as California, Alaska and Hawaii in the United States, Ontario and Toronto in Canada, and Auckland in New Zealand, offering help for Sandin Lee's future.

Lilia Sevillano of New Zealand said she was "deeply moved" by the child's plight and was reminded of the time when her own family adopted a baby boy, also during a financially difficult period.

"Like the Ruiz family, God helped us raise him, and he has brought much joy and laughter to our lives," Sevillano wrote in an e-mail.

Many other readers were touched by the act of kindness of Sally, a widow, who is raising

WORLD/ A10


SILA-SILA NA LANG?

Senate will be no more by July, says Miriam

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

BY SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-Santiago's reckoning, there will be no more Senate by July.

In a statement expected to provoke protests from her Senate colleagues, Santiago said Congress, when it opens for its third session in July, can already convene as a constituent assembly to amend the Charter and effect the shift to a parliamentary system with a unicameral legislature.

Provided of course the Supreme Court shall have ruled by then on an issue brought before it: whether the constitutional provision that constitutional amendments can be proposed by a three-fourths vote of

SENATE / A8

OFW KIDS' SEPARATION ANXIETY

Principal of 'little' school sees big picture

By Volt Contreras

IN THE "LITTLE" SCHOOL IN THE Cordilleras, its principal, Georgina Alipio, saw the big, alarming picture of pupils whose parents have joined the swelling ranks of overseas Filipino workers and did something.

Cited for a prestigious award yesterday, Alipio can be considered among the first educators to not only recognize, but also address a major downside to the so-called OFW phenomenon: Children growing up with "absentee parents."

At her Little Flower Children's Home Foundation, a privately run primary school in La Trinidad, Benguet, she has instituted a project dubbed Global Family Ties in a bid to ease the "separation anxiety" manifested by students from OFW-dependent households.

The project basically urges OFW parents to communicate with their kids "as often as possible" through letters, photographs, postcards, text messages, or, for families with home computers, through e-mails. The children, in turn, are encouraged to "open up" or share the joys of such correspondences with their classmates or teachers.

Result? It fosters a sense of security and understanding among children of OFWs.

Some of the postcards and photos, being handy and easier to display, end up being mounted on a special "Global" bulletin board which features a world map. The map would bear markers—changing from time to time—identifying the country where the latest post-

PRINCIPAL/ A8

RUDY ESPERAS

ALIPIO: Postcards from the edge.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

WAITING OUT THE STORM, stranded passengers sleep on the floor of the Tabaco, Albay port. Altogether 6,000 people were stranded in the nine main ports in Central Visayas and Eastern Bicol.

8 killed as 'Caloy' hits Bicol, Visayas

By Leila B. Salaverria, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and PDI Visayas Bureau

THE BOATS WERE WARNED NOT to leave because of the storm but one of them allegedly still tried to sail away. It never reached its destination.

Carrying at least two dozen people, the motorized outrigger boat sank off Masbate as tropical storm "Caloy" raged through the Visayas and Bicol regions yesterday, drowning six people on board.

They were among the eight people killed in the path of the storm, which slammed across the central parts of the country yesterday, sinking at least three boats, causing landslides and flash floods, triggering power blackouts and destroying dozens of houses.

"*Tumakas daw, yun ang sabi sa amin. Basta umalis, hindi nagpaalam* (It just pulled away, that was what we were told. It just left without asking for our permission)," Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme, quoting initial reports, told the INQUIRER.

The boat, identified by the Coast Guard as the M/B May Ann 5 and by civilian sources as the M/V Mae-Ann, sank around 4:00 a.m. yesterday.

Five of its occupants were missing while 13 survived, the Coast Guard said.

Coyme said the vessel, described by some residents as having huge outriggers, set sail apparently for Pilar, Sorsogon, despite a PCG ban against light vessels traveling because of the rough seas.

8 KILLED/ A10

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: Inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Western Visayas will experience stormy weather. The rest of Luzon and Visayas will have rains and gusty winds while Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/12/06

Metro Manila	Stormy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Stormy
Baguio	Stormy	**Roxas**	Stormy
Tuguegarao	Stormy	**Cebu**	Stormy
Laoag	Stormy	**Tacloban**	Stormy
Clark Zone	Stormy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Stormy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Stormy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

BIR chief in hot water over poor collections

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG WILL SUMMON BUREAU OF Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Marie Buñag and his team to explain BIR's dismal revenue performance in April, traditionally the peak month for tax collection, amid mounting calls for a revamp of the agency which contributes up to 60 percent of the government's total revenues.

BUNAG: P10 billion short of target.

ERMITA: We will summon BIR team.

"We haven't asked them yet, but I will ask them soon. We will let them account for this data why they have under collection," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita in a briefing.

From January to April this year, the BIR reported total collections of P69 billion which was P10 billion short of the target even though it was almost 10 percent higher than the P62.935 billion registered in the same period last year.

Last week, Buñag had told the Department of Finance that the revenue target of P675 billion this year was too high.

But Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang had faith in Buñag's capability to attain the full year collection target. "We know that collections have highs and lows, what is important is the total collections at the end of the year," Bunye said.

"Two weeks ago, we brought the team before you (media), together with Bureau of Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales and they showed us data on how their collections were. But I suppose something must have happened in-between," said Ermita.

But Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an economic adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the public, weary of higher taxes and rising costs of oil, would settle for nothing less than a revamp at the BIR.

"The magnitude of shortage in a period of plenty eliminates any viable pretext. Change of bureaucratic leadership is the only proportional first move because we need to immediately reestablish control of our core fiscal program. Any policy hesitation would be very costly and we cannot afford it. The numbers are glaring. A review is a waste of time better spent in finding a replacement," said Salceda in an interview.

Salceda said the Large Taxpayers Services—composed of the country's top 1,000 corporations and contributes half of the BIR's collection—suffered an P18.35 billion shortfall in income tax which was offset only by higher value added tax.

"Clearly, it could rise only from a grand connivance between an unpatriotic big business and unscrupulous BIT officials. The meltdown in BIR collection effort is most dismaying and any remedy can only begin with a change in leadership to restore the public's faith in the agency. A report like this can only be submitted with a resignation later as a cover memo," Salceda said.

Salceda said it would be difficult for the President to continue asking the public to bite the bullet when the pain was not equally shared between the rich and the poor.

"While the VAT passed on to consumers was up 75 percent, the income tax was up a measly three percent as every tax loophole was gouged and every accounting trick employed to escape share of burden. The rich get away with murder by hiring tax lawyers," Salceda said.

Salceda noted that a chunk of the P18.35 billion drop in collections from large taxpayers came from adjustments made in the fourth quarter collection tally last year. "The dismal under performance of income tax in the fourth quarter last year which was to be paid in April 2006 is unacceptable. The fourth quarter is seasonally the most robust, the economy was at its robust during the period when gross domestic product surged 6.1 percent in the fourth quarter versus the 4.8 percent average through the first three quarters," said Salceda..

He said the shortfall becomes even more conspicuous considering that the fourth quarter economic surge was led by the industrial sector which had more revenue potential than agriculture and services.

Make-or-break ascent up world's highest peak to start in 2 weeks

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S A PIT STOP BEFORE THE final stretch.

Two mountaineering teams vying to be the first to plant the Philippine flag at the top of Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain, are taking a break at Everest Base Camp (5400 meters of 17,700 feet) before their final assault on the summit around two weeks from now.

Veteran mountaineer Romi "Garduch" Garduce, an IT professional in his 30s, has been resting at Base Camp for the past week after climbing to Camp 3 (6,828 meters or 22,376 feet) over the weekend.

According to Garduce's local contacts, Garduce "feels relatively strong" at present despite the difficulties he encountered on the Lhotse Face near Camp 3, where a Czech climbing alpine-style (without oxygen and fixed ropes) died recently. "It's really difficult. My strength was sapped," Garduce told his contacts.

At Camp 3, Garduce spent the night to acclimatize despite difficulty in sleeping. "Camp 3 is such a difficult place. At some parts you need to wear harness when you go outside the tent since the camp grounds are quite small and there is a big chance you can slip and fall," Garduce said.

Adventure racers Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata, members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FMEE), also reached Camp 3 last week and spent some nights at Camp 2. They were back at Base Camp the other night.

Regie Pablo, FMEE team leader, told the INQUIRER that the two are in great shape, adding that they had already established a camp with supplies and equipment on Camp 4.

Pablo said an assault on the summit of Mt. Everest from Base Camp will take around two to four days "but this is still dependent on the weather. And we know how fickle the weather is on Everest."

Aside from resting, the three climbers are waiting for good weather and the fixing of ropes on the upper sections of the Southeast route, specifically from Camp 4 (8000 meters or 26,000 feet) to a place called the Balcony near the summit.

Mounteverest.net reported that expedition leaders at the Southeast route have decided to send Sherpas to the South Col on May 14 to fix the ropes. This process will take around two days and assaults on the Southeast side will likely begin on May 16.

The moment the lines are fixed, Garduce, Oracion and Emata are expected to take on the summit of Mt. Everest.

Once the teams reach Camp 4, they will rest a few hours and start their final push for the summit around midnight to try to reach the summit the next morning. This schedule is important to enable climbers to start their descent in the afternoon of the next day since descending at night is dangerous. Second chance attempts from Camp 4 are rare and difficult because of the amount of exhaustion the body will be subjected to.

The FPMEE is being supported by ABS-CBN while Garduce is being backed by rival network GMA-7.

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200 killed in Nigerian oil pipeline blast

ILADO BEACH, NIGERIA—UP TO 200 PEOPLE died on Friday when an oil pipeline blew up at a beach village near the Nigerian economic capital Lagos, a policeman at the scene told AFP.

The officer, who asked not to be named, put the death toll at between 150 and 200 "or even more".

The Nigerian Red Cross had earlier reported more than 100 deaths as a result of the explosion at Ilado beach village, near the port of Apapa, where numerous oil installations are located.

"Over 100 people were burnt to death and beyond recognition following the explosion," Nigerian Red Cross Secretary General Abiodun Orebiyi told AFP by telephone.

"We have been unable to recover any injured person. All of them were burnt beyond recognition. We found at the scene of the explosion about 500 jerrycans which we suspect were used to steal fuel from the pipeline," he said.

An AFP correspondent at the scene reported seeing scores of carbonized, disfigured corpses floating on the water and lying under a boat that had been destroyed by the flames.

Only the bones remained of some of the victims.

There were indications several had attempted to flee before the fireball completely engulfed them, the correspondent said.

Orebiyi said the "raging fire" had been put out and normality was returning to Ilado.

He said Red Cross workers at the scene had found evidence that people had been trying to siphon off oil from the pipeline.

"We found that vandals have drilled holes on (into) the pipeline, from where they have been stealing fuel. We advise strongly Nigerians to desist from this dangerous act."

Private television network Channels said fire fighters and officials from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) had been sent to Ilado village.

The TV did not show any images of the blast but during the morning a huge column of very black smoke was visible from the center of Lagos.

The impoverished people of Africa's oil giant often tap into pipelines, seeking fuel for cooking or resale on the black market. The highly volatile petroleum can ignite, incinerating those collecting it.

Hundreds of people have been killed in pipeline explosions in the past few years across Nigeria, many of whose citizens live in abject poverty despite the nation's huge oil riches.

In September 2004, an oil pipeline exploded near Lagos as thieves tried to siphon oil from it, with up to 50 people perishing in the flames. A 1998 pipeline blast killed over 1,000 in southern Nigeria.

Nigeria, which normally pumps 2.5 million barrels of crude per day, is Africa's largest producer and the fifth-largest source of imports to the United States. *AFP/AP*

Batasan 5 charged again

From page A1

manding Ms Arroyo's resignation.

The charge sheet named these alleged fronts as party-list Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, and other organizations like the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Gabriela, Pamalakaya, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Kadamay, League of Filipino Students, Kaguma, Courage, Armas, and Cairus, "among others."

Also included in the group was the "CNL," presumably a reference to the Christians for National Liberation group.

The charge sheet also included "several other John/Jane Does."

"This is the same information, only rewritten and compressed," said Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, chair of a DOJ task force prosecuting the case. "It has the same allegations and elements as the amended information."

The five militant lawmakers have denied involvement in any plot against Ms Arroyo and denounced the charges against them as pure fabrication.

Sison, Ka Roger, et al.

The DOJ filed the new information eight days after Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino refused to accept a so-called amended complaint which would have included the "Batasan 5" and the others in a pending rebellion case against Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan of the Magdalo group.

Delorino later inhibited herself from the Beltran-San Juan case, which is now to be re-raffled to another judge. The Beltran-San Juan case is also anchored on a supposed leftist-rightist conspiracy to overthrow Ms Arroyo.

The 46 named respondents in the new case included CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison and spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, National Democratic Front (NDF) leader Luis Jalandoni, several other rebel soldiers and people identified with leftist groups.

Velasco said his team would ask for the consolidation of the original and the new cases into just one case.

DOJ allegations

The DOJ's previous attempt to indict the "Batasan 5" prompted the five lawmakers to seek refuge in the House of Representatives. The stalemate ended earlier this week after 70 days when they left the Batasan Complex following Delorino's ruling.

The new information said that "on or about Feb. 24, 2006, and for some time before ... and continuously thereafter," the 46 conspired with Beltran and San Juan "to effect and ensure the complete and permanent success of the armed rebellion, for the purpose of removing from the allegiance to said government or its laws, the territory of the Republic of the Philippines or ... depriving the Chief Executive or the legislature wholly or partially of any of their powers or prerogatives and overthrowing the President of the Republic of the Philippines, and the present duly constituted government..."

'Chaos and terror'

The accused "have risen publicly and taken up arms against the government, and continue to do so up to the present date," the charge sheet said.

It linked the group to such acts as creating "chaos, disorder, terror and fear" to achieve their goal.

It accused the "Batasan 5" and the other leftist personalities of forging ties with the Makabayang Kawal ng Pilipinas (MKP), a group of rebel soldiers, to carry out the rebellion and overthrow "the Estados Unidos (United States)-Arroyo regime."

Main event

The uprising was to be carried out on Feb. 24—during the anniversary of the Edsa People Power revolution that overthrew Ferdinand Marcos in 1986—and would involve an attack on Malacañang Palace "on May 1, 2006."

The establishment of the CPP in 1968 was cited in the new case to show the alleged string of violent acts of the communist group, said Velasco.

"The main event in this case is the alleged coup on Feb. 24," Velasco said.

Delorino ruled last week that the proposed amendments constituted an entirely new case, and could not supplant the one filed against Beltran and San Juan as it contained new theories and allegations.

In rejecting the amended information, Delorino said she was not ruling on the merits of the case and that the DOJ could still pursue its case against the 46 but it had to file a new information—which was what Velasco did.

The DOJ originally intended to appeal Delorino's ruling but Velasco said the prosecution decided to file a new case instead, to prevent delays. He said their move should not be taken as a submission to the judge's ruling.

"We maintain that filing the amended information is procedurally correct. But if we filed an appeal, it would take time ... We don't want to have further arguments ... Just so it would be done and over with," said the prosecutor.

Ready to face accusers

Ocampo, president of Bayan Muna and House deputy minority leader, said he and the four other party-list legislators were ready to face government lawyers in a court of law.

"We are ready to respond to whatever new fabrication the Department of Justice filed in the Makati Regional Trial Court," said Ocampo in a phone interview.

Maintaining his group's innocence, Ocampo said they would respond in full after they had obtained a copy of the charges against them.

"We need to get a copy of the new charge to be able to comment substantially ... Offhand, I can only say we stand ready to respond to the charge," he said.

Ocampo added: "It looks like the DOJ now anchors the charge on the fact that CPP-NPA is engaged in rebellion, and tries to implicate the Batasan 5 by alleging we're CPP-NPA leaders. There's no credible evidence for such an allegation." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

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GMA orders . . .

From page A1

against human rights," Bunye said in a statement.

He said the President had ordered the Philippine National Police to "leave no stone unturned" in investigating the killing of Elena Mendiola, Bayan Muna-Cagayan Valley secretary general, and her partner Ricardo Balauag, and in arresting their assailants.

Two men shot the couple dead as they were about to leave Barangay Garit Sur after an errand.

In a news conference at the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said he had formed Task Force Unsolved Killings, a top-level police probe that would look into the assassination of members of militant party-list groups Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela.

Puno said the task force would look into all possible angles, including the suspected involvement of military agents and reports of ongoing purges in the communist movement.

"The military is being blamed, but there is also a report that purges are going on," he said.

Puno said he formed the task force on the instructions of Ms Arroyo, who had "expressed grave concern over all the unsolved killings, including those of members of Bayan Muna."

He said he had assigned PNP Deputy Director General Avelino Razon to head the task force that would also include the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group under Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza and the PNP Intelligence Group under Senior Supt. Romeo Ricardo, the acting officer in charge.

Reconcile statistics

Puno said he intended to coordinate with the militant party-list groups to reconcile statistics on the killings.

According to Puno's figures, only 56 Bayan Muna members have been killed since 2001. But the human rights group Karapatan pegged the number at 91 following the killing of Mendiola and Balauag on Wednesday night.

Karapatan has the number of militants killed during the Arroyo administration at more than 560. But Puno's list has only 83.

Puno said he would welcome members of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela who wanted to be part of the task force.

"These were my colleagues when I was in Congress and I would not have any problems sitting with them in this investigation," he said.

He added that the task force had 72 hours to produce results from its investigation of the killing of Mendiola and Balauag.

Versoza, on the other hand, said the task force would produce in the next 72 hours an "analysis" of the killings recorded since 2001, at least as far as motives were concerned.

Even ranking officers

"We want to remove the impression that this administration countenances these killings. The President has been moving to abolish the death penalty, and it is not acceptable to [her] that deaths in the prisons [would be stopped] only to be done in the field," Puno said.

He said the reason he had assigned Razon to head the task force was to enable it to investigate even high-ranking officers being linked to the murder of militants.

Razon is the PNP deputy chief for operations and the third highest police official.

"We ask those who know anything to come out and help us in this investigation," Puno said, adding that the probe would be transparent and professional.

Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan of the Army has been accused by Bayan Muna and Karapatan of being behind the killing of anti-Arroyo activists wherever he was assigned in the countryside.

Asked if the task force would investigate the military establishment, Puno said: "We are not exculpating anybody this early. The reason I formed this task force is to show that this is not just any other investigation but a national police matter."

Theories

As the task force prepared to begin its work, Versoza offered a couple of theories to explain the wave of murders—that these were part of an "ongoing purge" within the communist movement, or were a result of personal vendetta.

"In the previous incidents that we have investigated, there was an indication of purging within ... the leftist organizations," he said. "Also, let us not discount the possibility that these killings might have been personally motivated."

Even Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez attributed the killings to a communist purge.

Asked to comment on reports that the military was behind the killing of leftist leaders, he said: "Why will the military do that? Communist leaders themselves admit that they have done purges to clean up their ranks."

Gonzalez also assailed this newspaper for supposedly making a big thing of the killings, saying: "What's happening here is when a communist is killed, whatever is the reason, it still comes out as banner headline in the INQUIRER."

'Rumors'

Asked if the task force would begin its probe with the accusation that the Armed Forces was responsible for the murders, Versoza said: "We will first look into the available data, or available initial investigation reports, or initial interview of witnesses on whatever the motives might have been. Pertaining to the rumors that the military is involved here, we will look at all angles."

The way Puno put it, investigators will not be knocking on the doors of the AFP and asking soldiers what they had to say about the "rumors" of military involvement in the killings.

"That is not the way you do things," he said.

But at least one militant organization rejected the idea of a PNP-led probe into the murders.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) strongly reacted to the earlier remark of PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao that there was "no factual basis" to pin the killings on government security units.

"What will happen to the investigation? The PNP is operating under the directives and orders of the principal suspect and her accomplices in the wave of political killings," Pamalakaya said.

It said it would formally ask the United Nations' Human Rights Council to look into the matter.

'Dirty war'

At the Senate, administration Sen. Ralph Recto called on Malacañang to unmask and "neutralize" the groups behind the apparent "dirty war" against Bayan Muna activists.

"And if there are rogue elements under the state's employ who are behind the killings, then all the more should the government go after them," Recto said in a statement.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP chief, also pressed the military to "take action" on the killings.

"Any armed group can commit these crimes because if nothing is being done to identify these perpetrators, the natural and logical suspects can only be agents of the law," Biazon said.

He called on the Commission on Human Rights to investigate the killings and warned that the military would lose its credibility if these were not solved. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Armand N. Nocum and TJ Burgonio*

Correction

IN THE MAY 11 issue, the front page story—"2 more leftists shot dead"—misstated the date of the first attack on slain Bayan Muna leader Elena Mendiola. The attack was the second assassination attempt on Mendiola in two months, not "in less than 24 hours" as stated in the story. Mendiola survived the first attack on March 10 this year.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

Gov't turns down Lafayette bid for test-run of mine

By Blanche S. Rivera and Christine Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERday rejected Australian firm Lafayette Philippines Inc.'s request to do a test-run of its processing operations.

Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes yesterday said he would not decide on Lafayette's request to allow a test run of the Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project before the fact-finding commission formed by Malacañang has submitted its report.

Lafayette has asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to allow a test-run of its processing facilities as the company had complied with all government requirements since mid-April.

"We are disappointed but we respect the decision of the Secretary. We understand the pressures that he has to go through," Lafayette president Carlos Dominguez said in response to Reyes' decision. He did not elaborate.

Lafayette said the company has been maintaining its polymetallic project in Albay at a cost of P150 million a month since November when the DENR suspended its processing operation due to the mine spills.

"We will withhold any decision until we have received the final and comprehensive report of the Bastes commission," Reyes said in a press conference yesterday.

The Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission led by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes has been tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the environmental impact of the two mine spills in Lafayette's mine site last year.

The commission, formed on March 10, was supposed to submit its final report with recommendations on the viability and legality of the Lafayette project on April 10, but Bastes sought an extension of the deadline for submission to May 5.

Saying it was still finalizing the results of the stakeholder consultations and hearings, the commission again moved the deadline from May 5 to May 19 or next Friday.

"We will look at the result of that study before we look into Lafayette's request... (then) As DENR Secretary, I will also submit my own recommendations to the President," Reyes said.

The DENR has fined Lafayette P10.7 million for illegally discharging waste water from its tailings ponds in violation of the Clean water Act.

The discharges on Oct. 11 and 31 allegedly caused fish kills in Rapu-Rapu and fish scare in the rest of Albay due to the cyanide that was dumped into the bodies of water near the mine site.

Lafayette said the non-operation of its processing plant has hurt the company in terms of maintenance cost and lost opportunities.

DENR steps into La Mesa dam row

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIronment and Natural Resources yesterday stepped into the row between Bantay Kalikasan and employees of the Metropolitan Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System, taking the stance of environmentalists who oppose the MWSS housing project.

Saying the La Mesa dam was a "very, very important facility," Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes yesterday proposed that the reservoir be declared a protected area.

"La Mesa dam is a source of drinking water for Metro Manila. The configuration of the terrain is such that if it (domestic pollutants) drains into the dam, it is dangerous. It must be declared a protected area," Reyes said in a press conference yesterday.

The DENR would form a team composed of its own experts and scientists from the academe to do a protected area suitability assessment (PASA) of the La Mesa watershed.

Reyes said the team would check if the La Mesa watershed, where there is already an existing housing for MWSS executives, could be declared a protected area.

The study should also detail the limits of the area for a possible protected watershed.

"If it is a protected area, then you are effectively declaring that it is in the public interest that you don't have establishments, structures there," he said.

Environmentalists led by Gina Lopez, ABS-CBCN Foundation Inc. managing director, have banded together into the Save La Mesa Dam Coalition and asked the government not to convert 58 hectares of the 2,700-hectare watershed into a housing area.

Lopez, who also heads Bantay Kalikasan, said the houses within the watershed could send pollutants downstream to the La Mesa reservoir, which supplies water to Metro Manila's 12 million residents.

The environmentalists will have a meeting with Reyes on Monday to discuss the issue.

"My only concern is the impact on the environment. Is it a potential damage to La Mesa dam?" Reyes said.

The DENR chief said he would suspend the granting of an environmental compliance certificate to the MWSS unions until the PASA is finished.

The MWSS unions, backed by a new pro-poor coalition called the Kalikasan at Katarungan para sa Magandang Kinabukasan (KKK), have not yet applied for an ECC for the housing project on a 58-hectare portion of the La Mesa watershed.

The KKK has lambasted the Save La Mesa Dam Coalition for being anti-poor, saying it did not raise a howl when nearby malls, subdivisions and the MWSS executive housing were being built.

Reyes said the government could take even the private lands if necessary. The 1,411 MWSS employee-beneficiaries of the housing project had titles to the lots reserved for housing.

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Who says soldiers are womanizers?

SOLDIERS MAY BE REPUTed to be womanizers, but the Philippine Army disagrees.

The 75,000-strong Army said its records showed that only 14 soldiers have been subjects of formal complaints by their wives and lovers.

The complaints filed before the Army Provost Marshal range from bigamy, abandonment, non-child support to non-sharing of benefits, according to Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro.

He said the figures show that contrary to common perception, cases of unfaithfulness among Army soldiers are "limited."

"Considering the total number of soldiers, the incidence of bigamy etcetera, is very limited," Bacarro said.

He said the Army does not tolerate such behavior from its troops.

The Army refused to identify the soldiers being investigated, citing the "confidentiality" of the cases, nor would it say if any one is facing trial in a military court for marital infidelity.

The Army could not immediately cite a case where a soldier or an officer was dishonorably dismissed from the service for bigamy or abandonment.

Last Thursday, the wife of an Army soldier took her 4-year-old son to the Army headquarters to force her husband to give child support.

18 killed in 2 Mindanao road accidents

By Dennis Jay C.Santos
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—AT LEAST 18 PEOple were killed while 40 others were injured in two separate vehicular accidents in Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley provinces.

In Panabo City, Davao Del Norte, a van owned by the Holy Cross of Davao College turned turtle after colliding with a JRC passenger bus along the J.P. Laurel national highway at around 4:15 p.m. Thursday.

Senior Supt. Jaime Morente, Davao del Norte police chief, said 11 persons were killed while some 26 other passengers were wounded in the collision.

Morente said the driver of the van lost control of the vehicle, causing it to collide with the passenger bus before it swerved to the side lanes.

On Wednesday night, a pick-up truck fell into a ravine in Barangay Tagamanok in Mawab, Compostela Valley killing seven persons on board and injuring 21 others.

Senior Supt. Nestor Quinsay, Compostela Valley police chief, said the vehicle came from Davao and was bound for Monkayo town when the incident occurred at around 7:45 p.m.

"The truck lost its brakes," Quinsay said.

In Zamboanga City, five persons were injured in a dynamite explosion inside the public market in Margos sa Tubig town in Zamboanga del Sur yesterday afternoon.

Supt. Ramon Ochotorena, police chief for Zamboanga del Sur, said five persons, including an 8-year-old boy, were hurt in the explosion.

Orchotorena said two groups of fishermen were engaged in an argument inside a videoke bar which only ended when one group exploded an improvised dynamite explosive commonly used for fishing.

Four persons were also wounded in another explosion in Barangay Arena Blanco in Zamboanga City at noon yesterday.

Supt. Jose Bayani, chief for operations of the Zamboanga City Police, said a family of four was preparing an improvised dynamite explosive for fishing when it suddenly exploded.

Four unidentified victims were brought to Zamboanga City Medical Center for treatment. *With a report from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Binay daughter, Saguisag son find 'dead' signature in Cha-cha

By Tarra V. Quismundo

EVEN THE DEAD WANT CHARter Change.

Or so it seemed until the fraud was discovered by two lawyers who are also scions of two prominent opposition figures.

A group of lawyers led by Abigail Binay, daughter of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, and Rene Saguisag Jr., namesake of his father, the former Senator, yesterday filed a forgery case before the Makati City Prosecutor's Office against Akbay Pinoy Inc., one of the groups behind the signature campaign for Cha-cha.

The case stemmed from the complaint of a daughter who found the alleged signature of his late father, Severino Victorino, a barangay captain in Makati City who died almost five months ago, on a petition seeking to amend the Charter.

"My father is already dead, and we found his signature. How did that happen? I don't know who's responsible for this but it's just impossible," said Victorino's daughter, Virginia Salenga.

The signature was among the many alleged forgeries the lawyers discovered out of more than 46,000 signatures forwarded to the local Commission on Elections (Comelec) by Akbay Pinoy for verification last April 17.

The initial 20 counts of falsification of public documents were filed against its officers Carmencita Tabamo and Adelaida Lazaro, along with yet to be identified members for allegedly faking several signatures of Makati residents to pad its signature collection.

As evidence, Salenga brought along her father's death certificate and a picture of his tombstone, which indicated that Victorino died on Dec. 24, 2005.

Victor del Prado, who assumed Victorino's post after the latter's death, was also among the complainants.

Edwin Vittali, a council member of Barangay Kasilawan, meanwhile, discovered that his signature was forged 18 times. Barangay Palanan resident Hugo Villaroman, the younger Saguisag's uncle, also signed the complaint upon learning that his signature had been faked.

"It's funny that they even included a dead man. Soon, we might be able to show you the tombstones of others who also signed. We really can't understand how that could have happened," said Saguisag.

Akbay Pinoy is a member of Sigaw ng Bayan, a multi-sectoral confederation that has been collecting signatures around the country to push for a people's initiative.

Malacañang says use of gov't funds legal

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID there were no legal impediments to the channeling of government funds to groups and individuals behind the campaign to amend the Constitution.

"I don't see any objection for as long as they have the budget," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye referring to Malacañang's release of funds to the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), Sigaw ng Bayan Movement, and other groups and individuals pushing for Charter change.

Ulap and Sigaw ng Bayan are spearheading the signature drive for a people's initiative to change the Constitution, an alternative route heartily endorsed by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself.

Malacañang, however, has denied having any hand in the signature drive as alleged by the opposition.

"Charter change is part of her Medium Term Philippine Development Plan and this was the topic of her State of the Nation Address. This is the policy of administration to educate our people on the whys and wherefores of Charter change," said Bunye.

As this developed, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday said Ms Arroyo was fanning calls for her resignation and snap elections by tapping the National Printing Office to run primers on Charter change.

Pimentel charged that the Public Information Agency's move to use the NPO to print Cha-cha materials, without Congress appropriating funds for it, only added to the list of the President's impeachable offenses.

NPO chief Felipe Evardone confirmed that PIA director Conrado "Dodie" Limcaoco Jr. made the request on April 7, but stressed that the agency printed only 100,000 copies in English and Filipino at a minimal cost. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio*

Isabela lawmaker denies calling Aragoncillo a hero

By Michael Lim Ubac

ISABELA REP. RODITO ALBANO III has disputed an INQUIRER story published yesterday which quoted him as calling former United States intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo, on trial for divulging White House classified information, a hero.

Albano denied in a statement sent to the INQUIRER yesterday that he had spoken "either for or against Aragoncillo with regard to his case, let alone, called him a hero."

In the statement, Albano acknowledged his friendship with Aragoncillo, but said he had nothing to do with the latter's relationships or dealings with the opposition.

At a press conference Wednesday, the lawmaker vouched for Aragoncillo's integrity, pointing out that the Filipino-American was only after the welfare of his former countrymen in sending messages here.

"What this (espionage case proves) is his sense of loyalty to the country," Albano told reporters at the House of Representatives.

He even called on politicians not to "make a mountain out of a hill," and help Aragoncillo, who had pleaded guilty to espionage charges, get a lighter sentence.

Albano confirmed receiving e-mails from Aragoncillo, but that these were purely personal exchanges.

RP wins seat in 47-member UN Human Rights Council

THE PHILIPPINES has achieved another remarkable success in the United Nations by winning a seat in the new 47-member Human Rights Council, according to Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., the Philippines' Permanent Representative to the UN.

Baja said 136 of the 191 member-states of the UN voted for the Philippines, giving it 40 votes more than the absolute majority of 96 votes required for a seat in the UN's top human rights body.

"We are gratified to note that the goodwill and respect the Philippines gained through our participation in the Security Council live on," Baja said.

He noted that the election of the Philippines spoke well of the country's human rights record, as the General Assembly resolution establishing the Council required members to take into account the contribution of candidate countries to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments to the cause.

The Philippines announced its bid for a seat two weeks after the adoption of the resolution establishing the Geneva-based Council, as a result of which other missions had a head start in their campaigns. According to Baja, 65 countries made a bid for the 47 available seats in the Geneva-based body.

Romero; 55

ARISTOTLE M Romero, brother-in-law of Journal Group of Publications editor-in-chief Gus B. Villanueva, died on Tuesday at the Heart Center in Quezon City He was 55.

He is survived by his wife, Lourdes Daisy, sisters Arlyne, Annabelle, Adorable, Audrey and Andra; brother Antonio III, brothers-in-law Gus Villanueva, Jun Luz; sisters-in-law Grace Castillo and Jeanna and Ramon and Rainer Ples.

His body lies at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment is set tomorrow at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina after the 8 a.m. Mass at Loyola (Guadalupe).

International Korean Language Foundation

Notification

The Third Employment Permit System Korean Language Test (EPS-KLT)

According to the M.O.U (Memorandums of Understanding on the sending of workers to the Republic of Korea (April 23, 2004) between The Ministry of Labor of Korea and Department of Labor and Employment of Philippines. The personnel who hope to be workers in Korea should apply for the EPS-KLT. And the International Korean Language Foundation executes the Third Employment Permit System-Korean Language Test (EPS-KLT) as follows.

– follows –

▶ Test date : June 04, 2006 (Sunday) 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

※ The Applicants should get in the test room before 1 hour to start the test. (Accurate time to get in the test room is 1:00 p.m.)

▶ Test subjects and Distribution of marks

Type of subject	The number of questions	Total score	Time
Listening	25	100	40 min
Reading	25	100	50 min
Total sum	50	200	90 min

※ There will be no intervals, the listening test and reading test will continue.

▶ Test venue : announcement later

▶ Qualifications for the general EPS-KLT
- Persons aging from 18 to 39 (inclusive);
- Persons who have not been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment or a more severe punishment; and
- Persons who have no record of deportation or departure orders from the Republic of Korea; and
- Persons who are not restricted from departure from the Philippines.

▶ Qualifications for the third EPS-KLT
- The male persons

※ The third EPS-KLT is restricted to male applicants because the considerable female persons of successful candidates are still remained on the roster of job-seekers of the Republic of Korea.

▶ Maximum Numbers of applying the third EPS-KLT
- 10,000 ("first-come, first-served" basis)

▶ The operation of registration
1) Registration period
   - *May, the 15th (Monday), 2006 – May, the 19th, 2006 (10 days)*
2) Registration sites
   - POEA Central Office (Manila)
3) Registration ways
   (1) The EPS applicants will apply directly in POEA Central Office

▶ Requirements for EPS-KLT
1) KLT Application Form
2) Copy of passport
3) 4 Photographs (4.5cm x 3.5cm)
4) Examination Fee (US$30 or its equivalent peso rate)

※ In order to apply for the test, applicants should be registered with POEA.
※ EPS-KLT passers should submit medical examination result to POEA.

▶ Announcement of successful candidate
1) *Date : June, the 16th, 2006 (Friday)*
2) Announcement site
   - The IKLF's homepage (http://www.glokorean.org), POEA's homepage and media (TV and Radio, etc)

▶ Further Information
- The POEA is destined to send the test record individually to the applicants from the four weeks after test date.
- Applicant should not carry the mobile phone (and any other things which is usable for illegal action) when the test starts.
- If you cheat the test with the illegal ways, the exam will be null and void, furthermore, you can not apply the EPS-KLT during two years.
- In case you lose your test certificate, this could be reissued by the IKLF and send it to POEA, but you present the passport or valid ID to the POEA.

◈ Though you pass the EPS-KLT. If we find the fact such as you fail physical checkup or you have previous record of the illegal foreign worker, etc., it is null and void.

◈ Though you pass the EPS-KLT, it is not assured that you get employment in the Republic of Korea.

The organization in charge of EPS-KLT
- The Ministry of Labor of the Republic of Korea

The organization which executes the EPS-KLT
- The International of Korean Language Foundation

The organization which cooperates with IKLF
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU
2nd Floor, G.L. Building,
Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City
Telefax 992-2194/ 992-2086 & 991-2311;
e-mail address mgb_ro9@yahoo.com

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

POLA MINING CORPORATION

MINERAL PRODUCTION SHARING AGREEMENT

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 76 of DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 96-40, Series of 1996, the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulation of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the "Philippine Mining Act of 1995", **POLA MINING CORPORATION**, with registered address at AMA Building II, No. 59 Panay Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines, has filed an application/proposal for Mineral Production Sharing Agreement for the exploration, development and utilization of gold and other minerals resources and particularly described as follows:

I. Registration No. **APSA No. 00099-IX**
II. Date of Registration **February 21, 2003**
III. Area Location : **Brgy. Piakan, Municipality of Sirawai, Province of Zamboanga del Norte**
IV. Technical Description of the Area:

POINT	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
01	7° 30' 00"	122° 05' 45"
02	7° 30' 30"	122° 05' 45"
03	7° 30' 30"	122° 05' 00"
04	7° 31' 00"	122° 05' 00"
05	7° 31' 00"	122° 06' 00"
06	7° 30' 45"	122° 06' 00"
07	7° 30' 45"	122° 07' 30"
08	7° 31' 30"	122° 07' 30"
09	7° 31' 30"	122° 06' 30"
10	7° 32' 00"	122° 06' 30"
11	7° 32' 00"	122° 06' 45"
12	7° 32' 30"	122° 06' 45"
13	7° 32' 30"	122° 07' 00"
14	7° 33' 00"	122° 07' 00"
15	7° 33' 00"	122° 07' 30"
16	7° 33' 30"	122° 08' 00"
17	7° 33' 30"	122° 08' 30"
18	7° 34' 00"	122° 08' 30"
19	7° 34' 00"	122° 10' 30"
20	7° 31' 30"	122° 10' 30"
21	7° 31' 30"	122° 09' 30"
22	7° 30' 00"	122° 09' 30"

Exception-The proposed Contract Area shall be subject to Section 19 of R.A. 7942 and Section 15 ("Area Closed to Mining Location") and Section 16 ("Ancestral Land") of DENR Administrative Order No. 96-40 Series of 1996. Among other things:

a) The following shall also be closed to mining locations: areas with valid and existing mining rights, existing mining applications, and area expressly prohibited by laws;
b) The following shall also be closed to mining location except upon written consent of the concerned government agency or private entity subject to the evaluation and validation by the Bureau; areas near or under public infrastructure or highways, waterways, railroads, reservoirs or private building, cemeteries archeological and historical sites, bridges, dams or other infrastructures projects, public or private works including plantations or valuable crops.
c) Application for mineral agreement or financial assistance agreement covering: small scale mining areas, civil or military reservations, areas covered by Certificate of Ancestral Domain claims or areas of ancestral land as may be defined by law shall require prior written consent of concerned individuals, groups or other government agencies having jurisdiction over the area as applied for.

#Note 1. The approval of an Environmental Compliance Certificate, with all the necessary consultations, shall be required prior to any and all mining consultation, development and production.
2. The Notice must be accompanied by a map/sketch plan with index map showing the nearest municipality(ies) and major environmental feature(s)

V. Size of the Area: 4,131.00 has.
VI. Duration of the Permit
   a. Exploration Period- shall have term of two(2) years renewable for another two(2) years each but in no case exceed a total of eight(8) years;
   b. Total duration of the agreement shall be twenty-five(25) years from the date of execution, subject to renewal for another period not to exceed twenty-five(25) years under the same terms and condition subject to changes mutually agreed upon by both parties and provided further, that such terms and conditions are not consistent with law and do not prejudice the principle of sustainable development.
VII. Extent of Operation to be Undertaken
   Development
   Construction and Utilization

Any and all persons having adverse claims, protest and/or opposition to the above mentioned application(s) are hereby notified that their adverse claims should be filed within thirty(30) days from the last date of publication/posting, directly either the Regional Office concerned or through any concerned Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) or Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) of DENR for filing in the Regional Office for purpose of its resolution by the Panel of Arbitrators and/or the concerned appellate body(ies), pursuant to the provision of Republic Act 7942 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Adverse claims, protest or opposition should be accomplished in accordance with section 203 and 204 of DENR Administrative Order 96-40, Series of 1996 and copy thereof shall be furnish to the application/contractor by adverse claimant.

For further particulars, apply or course your inquiries to the The Regional Director, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Regional Office No. IX, 2nd flr. G.L. Bldg., Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City

(Sgd.) CONSTANCIO A. PAYE JR.
Regional Director

(PDI - May 6 & 13, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development – Metro Manila
DR. JOSE N. RODRIGUEZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Tala, Caloocan City
Telefax: 962-82-09 / Tel. 962-98-84

May 02, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital invites responsible and duly accredited suppliers from DOH/CHD-NCR to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items:

A. DRUGS-MEDICINES-BS STOCKS
B. DRUGS-MEDICINES-Pay
C. MEDICAL SUPPLIES
D. LABORATORY SUPPLIES
E. JANITORIAL SUPPLIES
F. CARPENTRY SUPPLIES
G. PLUMBING SUPPLIES
H. ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES
I. OFFICE EQUIPMENTS
J. LINEN & OTHER SUPPLIES

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES:

Issuance of Bid Documents	May 22, 2006 (8:00 am – 4:00 pm)
Pre-Bid Conference	Item A-J May 24, 2006, (1:00 p.m.)
Checking of Eligibility Requirements	Items A & B May 24-30, 2006 (8 AM – 4 PM). Items C & D May 24 – June 6, 2006 (8 AM - 4 PM) Items E to J May 24 – June 13, 2006 (8 AM - 4 PM)

Submission and Opening of Bids

ITEMS	A.	June 01, 2006 (9:00 AM)
	B.	June 01, 2006 (1:00 PM)
	C.	June 08, 2006 (9:00 AM)
	D.	June 08, 2006 (1:00 AM)
	E, F & G	June 15, 2006 (9:00 AM)
	H, I & J	June 15, 2006 (1:00 PM)

Prospective bidders may secure bid proposal form from the BAC Secretariat, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (500.00).

All activities shall be held at the Training Room, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Tala, Caloocan City, unless announced otherwise.

Each bid must be accompanied by a bidder's bond in the form of a certified check, manager's check or GSIS bond in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid. The Approved Budget Cost is stated on the bid documents.

For further inquiries, interested bidders may contact the BAC Secretariat or call Telephone No. 962-9884 or 962-9886

Dr. JNRMH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to notice of award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidders of the grounds for the hospital's action.

(Sgd.) EDGARDO SA. JAVILLONAR, MD, MHA
Chief of Sanitarium III

(PDI – May 4 & 13, 2006)

P1-BUDGET

JPE ‘vindictive’ – PCGG

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD Government (PCGG) yesterday took Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to task for recommending a P1 budget for the agency.

Enrile was being “vindictive,” said Ricardo Abcede, PCGG commissioner for assets and management, because PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio and other officials refused to attend a Senate inquiry last Thursday into the alleged dissipation of assets of the Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC).

At the start of yesterday’s hearing, Enrile, one of the founding shareholders of PHC’s mother firm, Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat), proposed a P1-budget for the PCGG.

“Let him [recommend a one-peso budget]. Our budget would be reenacted. He is so vindictive. I thought he is for reconciliation but his legislative action is colored by the desire to join (Victor) Africa and his group or take over,” Abcede said.

The other day, Sabio had written the Senate saying that no official of the agency would be attending the Senate hearing which was scheduled last Thursday.

Sabio invoked Section 4-B of Executive Order No. 1, which created the PCGG. The provision states that no staff of the commission is required to testify or produce evidence concerning matters “within its official cognizance.”

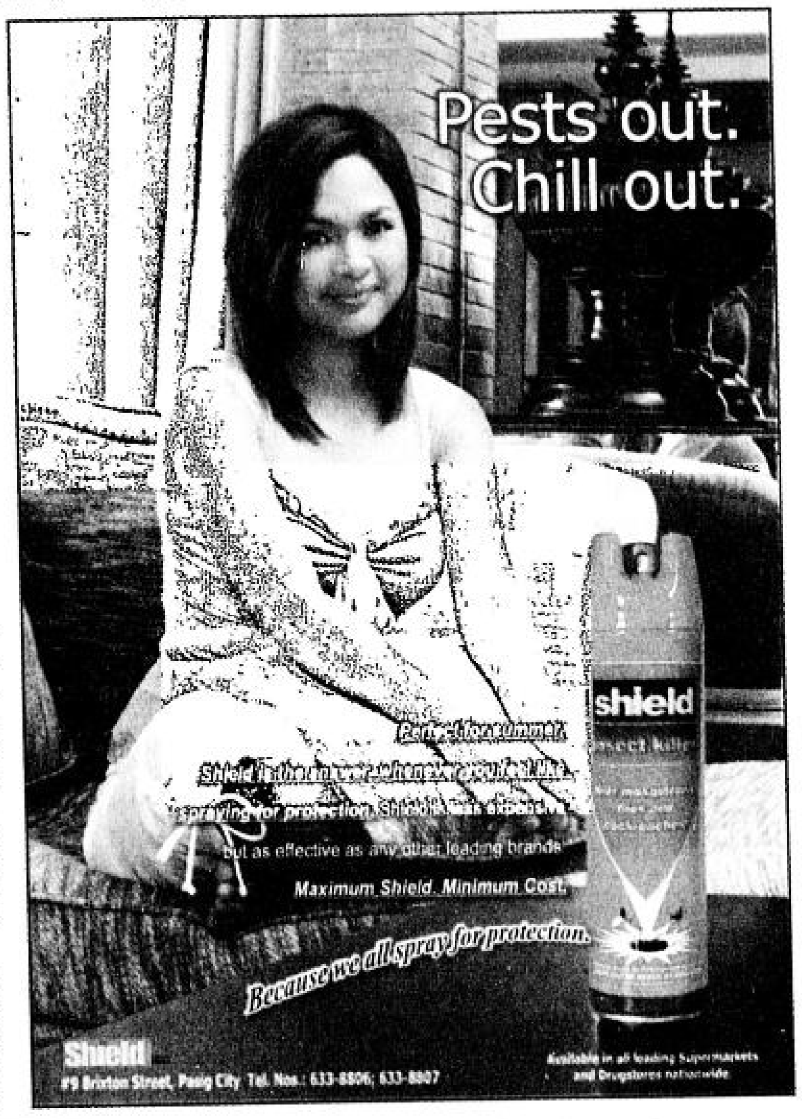
Enrile questioned the constitutionality of the provision and said he would file a bill to repeal it.

In January, Sabio and the PCGG earned the ire of the Senate when they refused to answer questions on the alleged compromise for the coco levy funds and the Marcos wealth. At the time, senators also recommended a P1 budget for the PCGG.

The Philcomsat controversy erupted last week when Enrile criticized the board of Philcomsat Holdings, including representatives of the PCGG, for “dissipating” the assets of the publicly listed company.

Enrile asked the board to explain how a substantial part of the P1 billion that he said the company got from Philcomsat was spent.

A few days later, Philcomsat Holdings director and vice president Philip Brodett said the company’s assets were intact. The company’s financial report in 2005 said total assets amounted to P1.48 billion, down from P1.50 billion in 2004. Cash and cash equivalents were P691.0 million, down from P746.2 million in 2004.



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Principal of 'little' school . . .

From page A1

cards came from or where the pictures were taken.

This, among other achievements, yesterday elevated Alipio as one of the 10 recipients of this year's Gintong Ilawan Teodora Alonzo Educator's Award, an annual recognition bestowed by the Department of Education and cosmetic company Avon.

10 awardees

The Gintong Ilawan (Golden Lamp) came with a cash prize of P50,000 for each awardee, a study grant courtesy of the DepEd and a special course called "Principal School Management Program for Prism" from the Asian Institute of Management, a medallion of excellence and a sculpture-trophy by renowned artist Ton Raymundo.

The trophy depicts Teodora Alonzo, mother of national hero Jose Rizal, with her young prodigious son on her lap, guiding him through a book by a table lamp.

The award has been recognizing female elementary and high school principals both in public and private schools since 1989. In all the previous awards, only one winner had been chosen, but in this year's edition, "Gintong Ilawan" was handed out to 10 women achievers.

Keen observer

Alipio, who was fittingly described in her nomination papers as a "keen observer" of her community, said she first sensed the problem, one school day in 2000—when she spotted a quiet, sad-looking boy.

This pupil, she recalled, showed up early for class, lingered longer than the others in the school yard as though willing to be marked absent, and finally went in with a cheerless look on his face.

At first, she thought the boy was feeling ill and hesitated on attending class, only to find out from his grandmother that the boy's "father had just left for Saudi Arabia" and that "they were very close."

A few weeks later, Alipio learned about a young girl attending prep school who "for three weeks in a row" cried for her grandmother to stay with her inside the room during the entire class.

Alipio would later get an explanation for the girl's fits: Her mother had just left the family to work in London.

Missing their parents

Located in Barangay Balili, Little Flower holds classes from prep level to Grade 6 and has an average yearly enrollment of around 160.

The school had 23 pupils with OFWs parents when the program was launched in 2000. The number was down to about 12 last school year—either because some of the parents returned from overseas or they decided to bring the children abroad with them.

Postcards from Saudi

"Fifty to 60 percent of these students would have behavioral problems or have falling grades," Alipio told the INQUIRER at the awards program held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

It came to a point when some of the worried OFW parents would personally call Alipio about their children's situation. "So I thought we could come up with a program that would at least lessen the strain and anxiety of the physical separation," she recalled. "I started asking the children's guardians here to encourage the parents to send postcards and photos."

While no official measure has been taken on the results of the program, Alipio said "the trend has changed" with lesser discipline or grading issues cropping up among the previously affected children.

"The children tend not to verbalize how they feel, but they like what's happening, especially what they see on the bulletin board," she added.

The winners

Louie Migne, head of Avon's Corporate Communications unit, said the award looks for "well-rounded school principals" who have not only worked to provide quality education for their students but whose "reforms" in the school would have an impact on the entire host community.

Playfully dubbed during the program as the "Avon 10," this year's honors were given to private elementary school principals, namely: Georgina Alipio of Little Flower; Dr. Anicia Alvarez of Hansel and Gretel Early Childhood Education Center in Zamboanga City; Mildred Ancheta of the Support for the Handicapped and their Rehabilitation through Education (Share), a study program for the hearing-impaired within the Wesleyan University-Philippines in Cabanatuan City; Loreta Cepriaso of the BHC Educational Institution in San Fernando, La Union; and Sister Miluna Cielo of St. Francis Academy in Sta. Teresita, Cagayan.

The other five winners are: Maria Bella Hernandez of the Mary Immaculate Parish Special School in Las Piñas, Metro Manila; Perla Kwan of Precious International School, Davao; Sister Zenaida Mofada of the Notre Dame-Siena School of Marbel in Koronadal City, South Cotabato; Adelaida Nadera of Dole Philippines School in Polomolok, Cotabato; and Linda Orduña of the Baguio Achievers Academy.

Villar still confident Drilon's a gentleman

From page A1

Congress resumes sessions on Monday.

The senator said Villar, reputed to be the wealthiest of the country's several hundred legislators, has 10 votes in the bag.

"The first senator who gets 10 votes will become the Senate President," said the senator who declined to be named.

"He can do it [unseat Drilon]," added the senator.

Another senator, however, said it was unlikely that Villar would make a move to unseat Drilon now.

13 votes needed

"Why rock the boat now? He respected the term-sharing agreement for two years. Why set that aside just one month [before he is to take over?]," the senator said.

After Drilon withdrew support from President Macapagal-Arroyo and called for her resignation in July 2005, it was thought that his hold on the Senate presidency was very precarious and a reorganization of the Senate leadership was in order.

But almost a year later, Drilon continues to prevail largely because there is no group in the present configuration in the Senate who has the solid numbers to issue a challenge.

A majority of 13 votes is needed to elect a Senate President and no one can muster the 13 votes right now, according to some senators.

As Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. describes the alignments in the Senate now, "Drilon has maybe 5 senators, Villar, 4, opposition, 7 and unidentified flying objects, 7."

LP bloc

Drilon heads his own four-person bloc of Liberal Party senators.

Villar, nominally with the administration bloc, is a member of the so-called "Wednesday Group" with Senators Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan.

According to Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, if the term-sharing arrangement is not challenged, then Villar would likely be Senate President in July.

But if it is contested, he said the status quo would be preserved, and Drilon would remain as head of the chamber.

But already, a number of senators are questioning the validity of the Drilon-Villar term-sharing agreement.

Senators Richard Gordon, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Manuel Roxas and Juan Ponce Enrile have said they did not consider the arrangement as binding on them.

Ethical infirmities

Yesterday, Santiago described the term-sharing deal as suffering from "ethical infirmities."

"Is it ethical for two senators to sign a written contract to divide a public office between themselves without the participation of other senators?" she asked.

"I respectfully submit that it is both unethical and illegal, because the court defines a public office as a public trust. Two senators cannot treat a public trust as if it were their own property," she said.

Santiago, a staunch ally of Ms Arroyo said to be the President's choice for Senate President, said that since the Drilon-Villar deal was invalid, there should be a new election for Senate President on July 24.

"Assuming the Senate will continue to exist, Villar's group of five senators will no longer vote for Drilon, so the Senate presidency will have to be determined by a rainbow coalition," she said.

But Santiago has suggested there might not be a Senate in July if the Supreme Court upholds a House resolution that Congress, sitting as a constituent assembly, can vote as one instead of separately to amend the Constitution. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Swing votes

According to Biazon, the opposition bloc would play a crucial role if the term-sharing deal is challenged and the choice for the next leader is put to a vote.

He said the seven-man opposition group led by Pimentel could provide the swing votes.

"We have to remember that the political equation when the term-sharing agreement was entered into by Senators Villar and Drilon is now different," he said.

"The political situation today differs from the political situation of that time. So this fact will definitely influence the outcome or answer to the question: Will it be implemented or will the status quo be pursued?"

Observers have noted that the opposition was not too keen to rock the Senate leadership now with Drilon at the helm. Since his break with Ms Arroyo, Drilon has led the senators in pursuing inquiries into alleged irregularities in the administration and has set the tone in the chamber's generally critical stance against Malacañang.

Senate will be no more by July, says Miriam

From page A1

Congress voting as one, as House Cha-cha proponents claim, or separately as the senators would have it.

Article 17 of the Constitution provides that "the Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members" is one of the modes by which constitutional change can be effected.

This interpretation is behind the House leadership's claim that the House can go it alone in Charter change without the participation of the reluctant senators.

Most senators have strongly opposed this position, insisting that the Constitution provides for separate voting.

Voting as one

Santiago is the first senator to indicate support for the House position construing the provision as meaning that Congress should be voting as one instead of separately.

Santiago, who believes the presidential ambitions of some senators have become a stumbling block to Charter change, has said she would participate in a constituent assembly if the high court were to rule favorably on the voting-as-one issue.

She said she would vote in favor of abolishing the Senate to make way for a unicameral parliament.

She said Senators Edgardo Angara and Lito Lapid have also indicated that they would participate in a constituent assembly.

195 signatures

"I don't want to forfeit by default my duty to help write the new Constitution," Santiago said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia and other House leaders last February launched a campaign to collect 195 signatures in support of a resolution for Congress to constitute itself as a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution according to a plan drawn up by Rep. Constantino Jaraula, the chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments.

The number 195 represents three-fourths of all the members of both houses of Congress.

"Between May 15 when the present session resumes, and July 24 when a new regular session begins, the Supreme Court will have enough time to hear and decide a test case on the House resolution to convene as a constituent assembly," Santiago said.

She said that with a constituent assembly possibly convening in July, the question of who is to be the new Senate President has become a non-issue. *(See related story, Page A1.)*

Change of heart

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he respects Santiago's change of heart on Charter change.

"The debate would now be more interesting but the Santiago v Commission on Elections ruling remains the same: Cha-cha through people's initiative is illegal because no law allows it," Pimentel said.

Because of the impasse in Congress, local government officials with the support of Malacañang have begun a parallel process to push for another mode of Charter change—through a people's initiative.

The Constitution provides that a people's initiative to change the Charter can be effected by 12 percent of the total number of registered voters representing 3 percent of each legislative district.

Proponents of the people's initiative have claimed that they are well on the way to collecting the 5 million signatures needed to fulfill the terms of the constitutional provision.

Issue to SC

But like the constituent assembly resolution, this issue may well go to the Supreme Court.

Santiago herself went to the Supreme Court during the Ramos administration to oppose a people's initiative aimed at enabling President Ramos to seek a second term.

In the Santiago v Commission on Elections case, the high court ruled in March 1997 that Republic Act No. 6735, or The Initiative and Referendum Act, was inadequate to cover a people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Saturday, May 13, 2006

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ABC Iba Tayo!

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kid's TV	KNN	Anime Ring Kaisho		PBA					Wow Maling Mali		Ripley's Believe It Or Not		The Three Swordsmen		Sabado Movie Greats			
ABS-CBN 2	ETK				Little Big Star		Komiks			Quizon Avenue		TV Patrol World	XXX		Pinoy Big Brother	When Disasters Strike			
AXN		Excess Baggage				AXN Shakedown		The Making Of Mission Impossible III	E Buzz	Ripley's Believe It Or Not		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Lost (Season II)				Supernatural (Season I)	
Cartoon Network	Powerpuff Girls	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Tom & Jerry Show	Pet Alien	Coconut Fred's Fruit Salad Island	Camp Lazlo	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		[illegible] The Speed Of Silence			The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Battle B-Daman	Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Justice League Unlimited	Aqua Teen Hunger Force [illegible] 2021
Cinemax	The Ticket (2:35 PM)			Commandments			Japanese Story (5:25 PM)			Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind (7:15 PM)				Lara Croft: Tomb Raider The Cradle Of Life				Passenger 57 (10:55 PM)	
CNN		World News	Global Challenges	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	Art Of Life	World News	World Sport	World News	Global Challenges	Quest		Talk Asia	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart
Crime/Suspense	Forensic Files	Bones		Profiler		North Mission Road	Body Of Evidence	Crossing Jordan		Surface		Bones		Prison Break					
Discovery Channel		Warrior Island II		Unsolved History		Power Zone				Discovery Encore		The FBI Files		Crime Stories		World's Strangest UFO Stories		American Chopper	
Disney Channel	Lizzie Mcguire	Totally Spies-Double Episodes		Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	Lilo & Stitch	Buzz on Maggie	Mr. Bean	Phil Of The Future	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	That's So Raven	Legends Of The [illegible] Home On Range			Mr. Bean	America's Funniest Home Video	Kim Possible	Martin Mystery	Freaky Friday	
ESPN		Asian X Games 06 - Day 2						Long Drive [illegible] Ultra Open				Motorsport Asia	Asian X Games '06 Presented by Kia	NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis Game 3					Motorsport Asia
ETC		Joan Of Arcadia		Friends 10	Will & Grace 4	Veronica Mars 2		The O.C.3		Beach Girls		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy Blowout 2		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	WSJR
ETC 2nd Avenue		Trading Spouses		Today Show - 1 Hour Version		Dateline		Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood One On One			Inside the Actor's Studio		ER		NBC Nightly News	
EWTN	Visionaries, Mystics & Stigmatists	Chaplet Of Mercy/Angelus	Image Of God	Adventures In Odyssey	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Knights Of St. [illegible]	Catholic Compass		Life Is Worth Living	The World Over Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/Angelus	The Word Was Made Flesh	Voices On Virtue	Backstage	Life on The Rock Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Special Report With Brit Hume		Fox & Friends Saturday						Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business
GMA 7	Startalk			Wish Ko Lang		Wag Kukurap	Pinoy Pop Superstar		Ripley's Funniest Videos		Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho		Imbestigador		Hokus Pocus			Showbiz Stripped	
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM)		Mr. Rock 'n Roll: The Alan Freed Story (4:05 PM)			Angel In The Family (5:40 PM)				The [illegible] (7:20 PM)			The Lives Of The Saints					
HBO				National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2: Cousin Eddie's Island Adventure			Manhattan Murder Mystery (5:45 PM)				Shrek 2			Blade: Trinity				Deadwood 21 [illegible] (10:55PM)	Mother (11:45PM)
Hero TV	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki	Gransazers	Shaman King	Bucky the Incredible	Jester The Adventurer	Musumet	The X-Treme Team	Love Hina	Fruits Basket	Lost Universe	Hero TV Tracks	Babel II	II OVA	Captain Kuppa	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		Nations Peacekeeper	Auto Review	Home Shopping Network		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Sports Arena		Japan Video Topics		Bitag		Pinoys Sabong Sports			
JackTV	X-Men	JLU	The Batman	Chan	Filter	Bottomline		Raw				Distraction	Banzai	Straight Plan For The Gay Man [illegible] Special 2001		South Park	South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers
Lifestyle Network	Carol Duvall	HGTV Special		Style Bridges: [illegible]	Radical Saboteurs	Simply Wine Andrea Immer	Food Fight	Date Plate	Email Live		Iron Chef America		Marge		NY Fashion Week	How Do I Look		E! Extra Celebrity Adventures	
MTV Philippines	MTV Live Red Hot Chili Peppers		Bling	The 2006 MTV [illegible] Show					Boiling Points	Wildboyz		Carling New Music: The Magic Numbers	Summerbreak Saugatuck Sugarfree	Making the Movie: M:I3	MTV Hits	Brand New	Massive	Jams	Rockola
MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	MYX Presents		Take 5	Radio MYX	Top Of The Pops	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Live!		Pinoy MYX Countdown				MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic		Living Eden: Palau, Paradise of The Pacific		Raiders Of The Lost Gold		Raiders of the Lost Gold: The World's Greatest Treasure Hunt		Dangerous Encounters: Dens of Danger		Built for the Kill: Coral Reef		Living Eden: Australia's Wilderness		Planet Football: [illegible] Confidential		Planet Football: Footballers & Beauty Queens		No Borders: Bouncing Under Fire	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]		Kamao		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Talk To Harry		GSIS Member's Hour (Replay)		Isang Hour On NBN		A.S.K.		Kusgada Kontra Krimen	
Nickelodeon	Drake & Josh	SpongeBob SquarePants	Trollz	The Fairly Odd Parents	Catscratch	Avatar: The Last Airbender	Danny Phantom	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Dark Oracle	Unfabulous	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	As Told By Ginger	Girls In Love	The Brothers Garcia	The Amanda Show	My Dad The Rock Star	[illegible]
PBO			Smith & Wesson				23rd Floor				Nasagapos Na Puso				Walang Matigas [illegible]			Groupee TV	
Qtv		Twelve Kingdoms		Kaleido Star		Candies		Fans Kita		Aytil Robot		Day-Off		Sabado Showdown					
RPN 9		Global Window	[illegible] Phenomenon	Biyaheng Langit	Global Window	Man & Machine		Global Window		Blind Justice		CSI Miami		Saturday Night Playhouse		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
SBN 21								Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan					NBA Action
Solar Sports				Billiards: Efren [illegible]						2006 NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis		Ultimate Fighting Championship			Superfights: C. [illegible] Logan				
Sports Plus																			
Star Movies		Ladder 49 (3:15 PM)								The Ladykillers (7:15 PM)				A View To A Kill				Live And Let Die (11:05PM)	
Star World		The Collector/The Watch (Series 1)		Miami Vice		Special Agent [illegible] Wild Card		Less Than Perfect	The Drew Carey Show (Series 8)	Grey's Anatomy		TNA Xplosion		World's Most Amazing Videos [illegible] Road To The Crown		Enterprise		The Simpsons	Less Than Perfect
Studio 23								Sports TV	Survivor Panama Exile Island	Pinoy Big Brother		The Haunted (8:10 PM)			Studio 23 Present				

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Bishops break silence on 'Da Vinci Code'

By Christian V. Esguerra

FINALLY BREAKING ITS SILENCE on "The Da Vinci Code," the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday expressed confidence that the Church would withstand this new attack on the very foundations of its faith.

"Let us not lose heart. The history of the Church attests to how the Gospel of Jesus Christ has withstood many trials. The truth of Jesus Christ can never be shackled," Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, CBCP president, said in a much-awaited pastoral letter on the upcoming film.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales described as "vicious and monetarily profitable" the venture of American author Dan Brown and Sony Pictures which produced the best-selling novel's Hollywood adaptation.

Like Rosales, the rest of the bishops were not buying the oft-repeated disclaimer that "The Da Vinci Code" is a work of fiction, especially since its author made claims of historical accuracy and precision in his description of artworks.

"It cannot be denied that fiction shapes the imagination, stirs emotions and forms mental associations. Brown has created the impression that his fiction is historical fact," Lagdameo said.

"Let us appeal to publishers and people in media to practice their profession responsibly, with uncompromising respect for the truth, especially about persons and beliefs dear to various religions and faith communities," he said.

The pastoral statement, relatively late considering that the movie is due for global release on May 19 (and in the Philippines on May 18), came with an eight-page attachment providing answers to serious allegations contained in the book and possibly, in the film as well.

In a letter to his priests, Rosales yesterday said that not since the time of the Arian heresy in the 4th century that there was an "attack on the divinity of Jesus Christ."

The CBCP did not say if it preferred to have the movie banned considering the allegations it might raise against the Christian faith.

Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles earlier asked the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to junk the film for its alleged "blasphemy."

In the novel, which is presented as fiction but historically accurate and a product of impeccable scholarship, former school teacher Brown claims that Christ's divinity was merely a human declaration at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

Lagdameo invited the faithful to "serenely affirm the fundamental truths of our faith" particularly that Jesus Christ is "truly God and truly human" and that "the revelation of Jesus, received in childlike faith, is preserved and transmitted by the Church."

Lagdameo lamented that the Brown novel "gives erroneous impressions of many things" while making "claims through fictional accounts that give the impression of historical accuracy due to frequent reference to events."

Though relatively delayed in their reaction, the bishops asked the faithful to engage in a "systematic study" of the Gospels and the rest of the teachings of the Church.

In the attachment to the pastoral statement titled "Handling Questions People May Ask About 'The Da Vinci Code,'" the CBCP answered point-by-point key allegations such as Jesus as just a "mortal prophet," Mary Magdalene as the fabled Holy Grail, and the suppression of the sacred feminine.

The CBCP also tackled questions about the Priory of Sion which Brown, apparently lifting from the pages of previously debunked books, presented as protectors of the bloodline of the so-called Jesus-Mary Magdalene marriage.

Moro rebs want film banned

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC Liberation Front is fighting for a new cause—to ban the showing of the controversial film "The Da Vinci Code."

Khaled Musa, deputy chair of the MILF committee on information, said the film should be banned out of religious respect.

The showing of the film "would only promote irreligiousness… it will not bring any good to the people," Musa said.

An adaptation of Dan's Brown best-selling novel, the movie will be shown in Asia on May 18. It reports, among other allegedly blasphemous things, of a possible relationship between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

This does not sit well with the conservative MILF, some leaders of the Catholic Church, religious groups and even an antipornography group.

The Philippine Alliance Against Pornography Inc. had asked the Commission on Human Rights to step in when the PAAP learned that Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) Chair Marissa Laguardia reportedly signed the permit to import the movie.

The PAAP said the movie was blasphemous and "anti-Christ."

Musa agreed. "Muslims are not believers of Jesus Christ as God, but we consider the movie blasphemous because it accuses Christ of things which do not befit him even as a prophet," he said.

"Freedom of expression should not invade freedom of religion… we agree with groups calling for the banning of this film," Musa added.

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Producers haven't submitted copy for review yet—MTRCB

By Norman Bordadora

FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE SCHEDuled showing of the Hollywood adaptation of "The Da Vinci Code," the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) has yet to receive a copy of the film for review.

"As of yesterday, the producers have not submitted a copy for review. The movie will not be shown in local theaters unless the MTRCB approves it," said MTRCB director Vic de Leon at the weekly Kapihan sa Newsdesk in Quezon City yesterday.

"Usually we require a couple of days [lead time] but the distributor [Columbia Pictures] can give it on the day itself because it only takes two hours to review it," De Leon said.

The MTRCB has three levels of review if stakeholders were to appeal the decisions. A rating is reached by the majority of a committee of three board members. If an appeal is made, the MTRCB en banc does the review.

If another appeal is made, the matter is brought to the President's attention. *With Scott James Roxas*

Candlelight protest vs Cha-cha

PROTESTORS AGAINST THE Cha-cha initiative will hold a candlelight, citizens' assembly at Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. tonight.

The interfaith meeting will also call for electoral reforms, including computerized counting of votes, before the 2007 elections.

"It is time to make a stand against forces that make light of our hard-won democratic processes," said the National Action for Political Renewal and Stability (Napras), organizer of the meeting, in a press statement.

"Ordinary citizens can make a difference and press for accountability. We can dispel the darkness that for so long has shrouded this land. Let us go out and light a candle and wake to a new morning."

Participants are requested to bring candles, rosaries and trash bags. Banners, placards or T-shirts proclaiming political affiliations are prohibited.

Napras is made up of KPK (Kapatiran sa Pangkalahatang Kabutihan), ISACC (Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture), and the NCCP (National Council of Churches in the Philippines).

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, May 13, 2006
4th Week of Easter
Our Lady of Fatima

1st Reading: Acts 13:26-33
Gospel: John 14:7-14

Jesus said to his disciples, "If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him."

Philip asked him, "Lord, show us the Father and that is enough." Jesus said to him, "What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees the Father; how can you say: 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

"All that I say to you, I do not say of myself. The Father who dwells in me is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe it on the evidence of these works that I do.

"Truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will do the same works that I do; and he will even do greater than these, for I am going to the Father. Everything you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And everything you ask in calling upon my Name, I will do."

Commentary

Paul and Barnabas preach the hard word to the crowd that assembles, telling them that they are to be the light to the nations. But because they refuse the Word, they turn instead to the Gentiles, who are delighted and respond to the Word with praise. The resistance becomes planned and they are expelled from the territory. The disciples are experiencing what Jesus warned them of—rejection and refusal to believe either the words or the works of God—and yet, they rejoice because they are doing the great works of God, glorifying the Father, with Jesus. The power of the risen Jesus with us is unmistakable.

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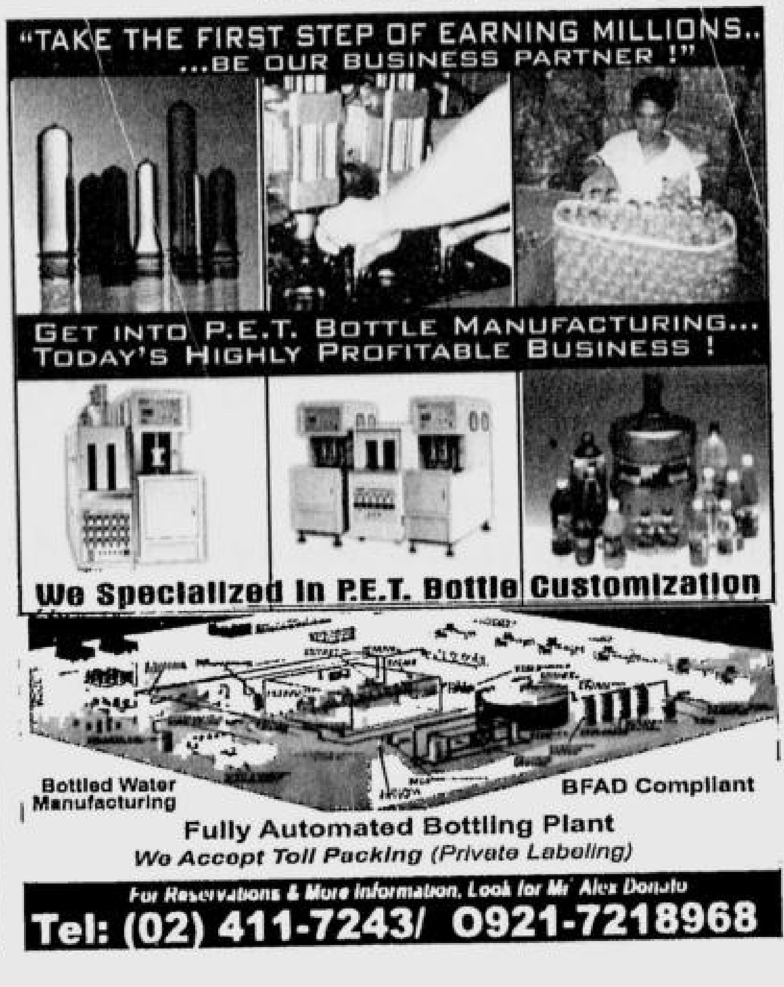
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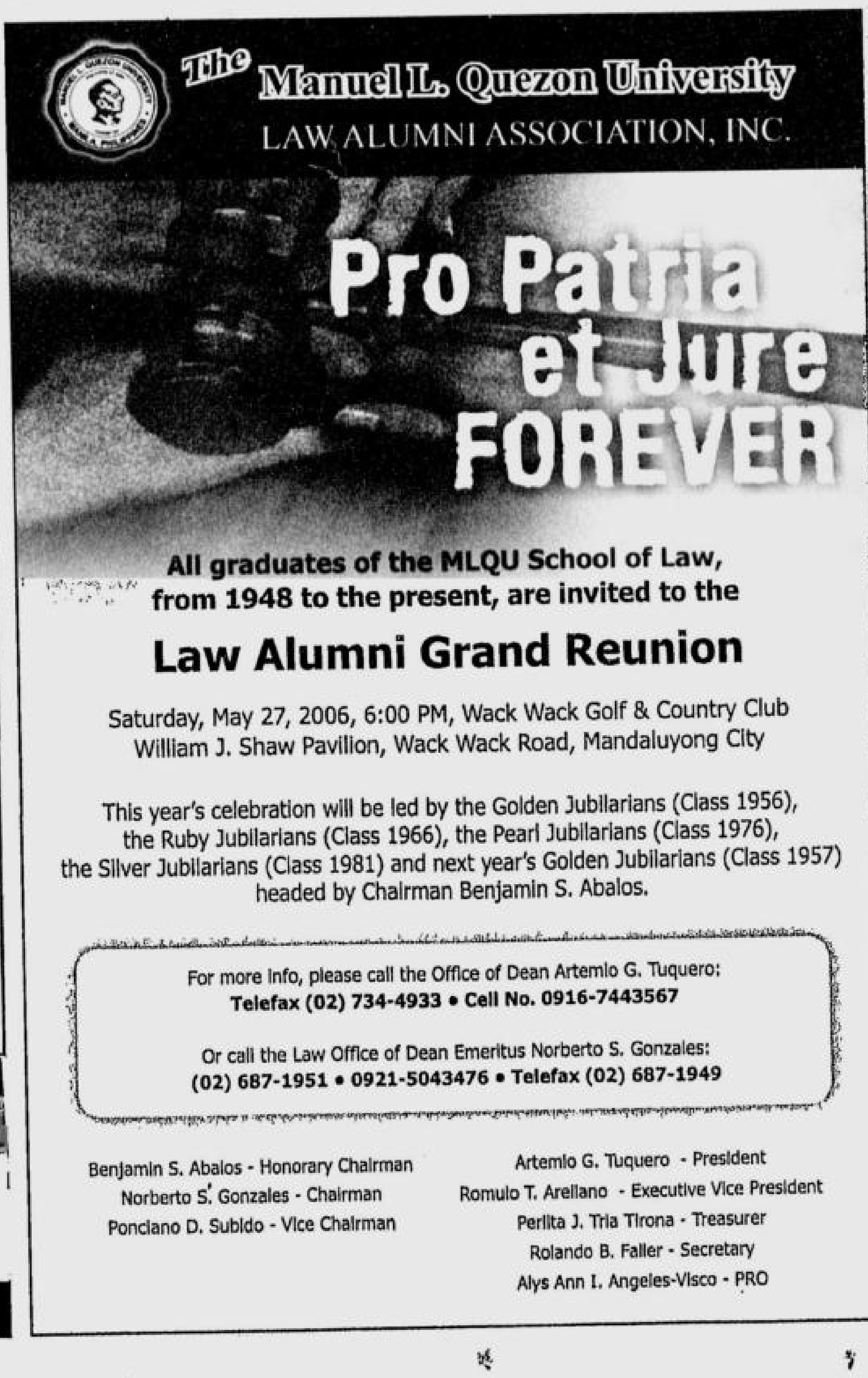
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THE TEARFUL, GRATEFUL Sally Ruiz points to her adopted son the INQUIRER story that appeared last Thursday, which started the outpouring of compassion and offers of support for her and her son who live in a shanty in Vitas, Tondo. EDWIN BACASMAS

World now reaches . . .

From page A1

Sandin Lee even if her own family survives on only P50 daily in a shanty in Tondo, Manila.

Poverty has not stopped Sally and her two grown children—Salme and Metilyn—from welcoming and nurturing the child.

Somehow, they are managing to stretch Salme's meager earnings as a scavenger to cover daily expenses, including the child's needs.

"It makes us remember that generosity, love and faith are the cultural traits that make the Filipino survive all odds," wrote a mother from Muntinlupa City.

'You're a good mom'

From Alaska, Elisa Hastie wrote: "Sally, you are a good mom. Thanks for adopting Sandin Lee. My prayers go to your family."

Manny Stelmach, who also works in the United States, said the situation of the Ruiz family "[reminded] us Filipinos here how we got to the land of opportunity."

"It's great for some [Filipinos] to see this kind of reminder. I was touched," he wrote.

Milou Percy, another Filipino living overseas, said she was moved by the generosity of Sally and her two children.

"I would like to know how we can help Sally and Sandin," she wrote. "Will the INQUIRER start a fund for them, or is there already an existing one to which we can send a donation?"

Those wishing to donate to the family may call Sally Ruiz directly at 0921-3735633. The mobile phone owned by her daughter Metilyn, a factory worker, usually has no "load," and can only receive calls and text messages.

OFWs role in Saudi progress behind mass pardon by king

From page A1

has never been done before, that it was not normal," Sto. Tomas said, referring to the mass pardons granted by King Abdullah when he met President Macapagal-Arroyo during her state visit there.

She added that the freeing of prisoners at the request of a foreign leader was difficult to obtain because the host country had its own justice system different from the foreign country's.

The labor secretary, in a phone interview, also shared her own "reading" as to why the king was kind toward Filipino workers.

"It's an affirmation of the king's high regard for the Filipino's inherent goodness despite the fact that some of us violated some of their customs and regulations," she said.

Sto. Tomas added: "It's his way of saying, 'Yes, there were some of you who may not have respected our laws, but most of you we respect and appreciate.'"

The secretary said that she met the governors of Riyadh and Eastern provinces, who are the king's close relatives, and the two personally heaped praises on the skills, honesty and kindness of Filipino workers.

Sto. Tomas, who accompanied the President in her audience with the king, recounted how Ms Arroyo opened the topic about the jailed Filipinos by saying how proud she was of the honesty, competence and contributions of the OFWs to the development of Saudi Arabia.

"The President then added if it were possible—[could] she bring home 50 OFWs [who were] jailed for light offenses?" Sto. Tomas narrated.

The king, according to the labor secretary, initially replied, through a translator: "No, you are not bringing home 50."

As many as you can take

"Our spirits were dampened, but then he continued, 'I'm asking the interior minister to see to it that you bring home as many people as you can take,'" Sto. Tomas said.

The King then spoke with Interior Minister Nayif bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud and Ms Arroyo for about half an hour, which was again unusual, Sto. Tomas was told, since only ceremonial matters, not business, were tackled during audiences with visiting heads of state.

Sto. Tomas said the Saudi interior ministry worked 24 hours, gathering records from jails all over the country, coming out with a final list, documenting and processing the legal papers of the Filipino inmates so that they may be speedily released.

She said she and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration chief Marianito Roque were then faced with the problem of booking commercial flights for those who had been freed.

King charters plane

The king heard about the predicament of the Philippine officials and personally ordered the interior minister again to charter a flight for the freed Filipinos.

Sto. Tomas said the President might have recognized even before the trip that there was a great "reservoir of goodwill" for the Philippines.

"But I don't think she quite realized how big that reservoir was and it's heartwarming because if you witnessed the discussions we had, it's very, very clear that they love the Filipinos," she said.

"It's an overwhelming sense of kindness, sympathy and appreciation for the Filipinos and I think that's something we should be happy about because they (the Saudis) really have a high regard for Filipinos," she added.

Coming home

Sto. Tomas said no influential individual or group helped the Philippine delegation lobby for the release of the OFWs. She explained that the pardons were the result of overtures begun late last year by the Philippine diplomats and labor officials with their Saudi counterparts.

These negotiations were supposed to be given a boost by Ms Arroyo's visit, which was postponed for some time.

In Manila, the repatriated Filipinos who arrived the other day were assisted by the Owwa in returning to their provinces.

Forty-three stayed overnight at the Owwa OFW Center and most of them had left by yesterday afternoon.

Skills training

In a press conference, Owwa deputy administrator Angelo Jimenez said the workers were given "training for work certificates" part of the President's scholarship program aimed at giving the returnees opportunities for livelihood.

The returnee can either undergo skills training in a school accredited by the labor department's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or obtain loans and grants from Owwa so that they can set up their own small businesses and cottage industries.

Minor crimes

According to Jimenez, most of the freed OFWs were charged with minor crimes which pertained to violations of immigration and residency regulations, as well as cultural offenses.

Jimenez said the effect of the pardons was to quash the cases against the OFWs whether they were convicted or not.

The rest of the returnees may not be able to return to the kingdom for a certain period of time as part of the penalties not covered by the royal pardon.

Jimenez said this would all depend on the nature of the OFWs' cases, although based on his experience, the pardoned OFW cannot return to Saudi Arabia immediately.

Government Warning: Cigarette s

8 killed as 'Caloy' hits Bicol, Visayas

From page A1

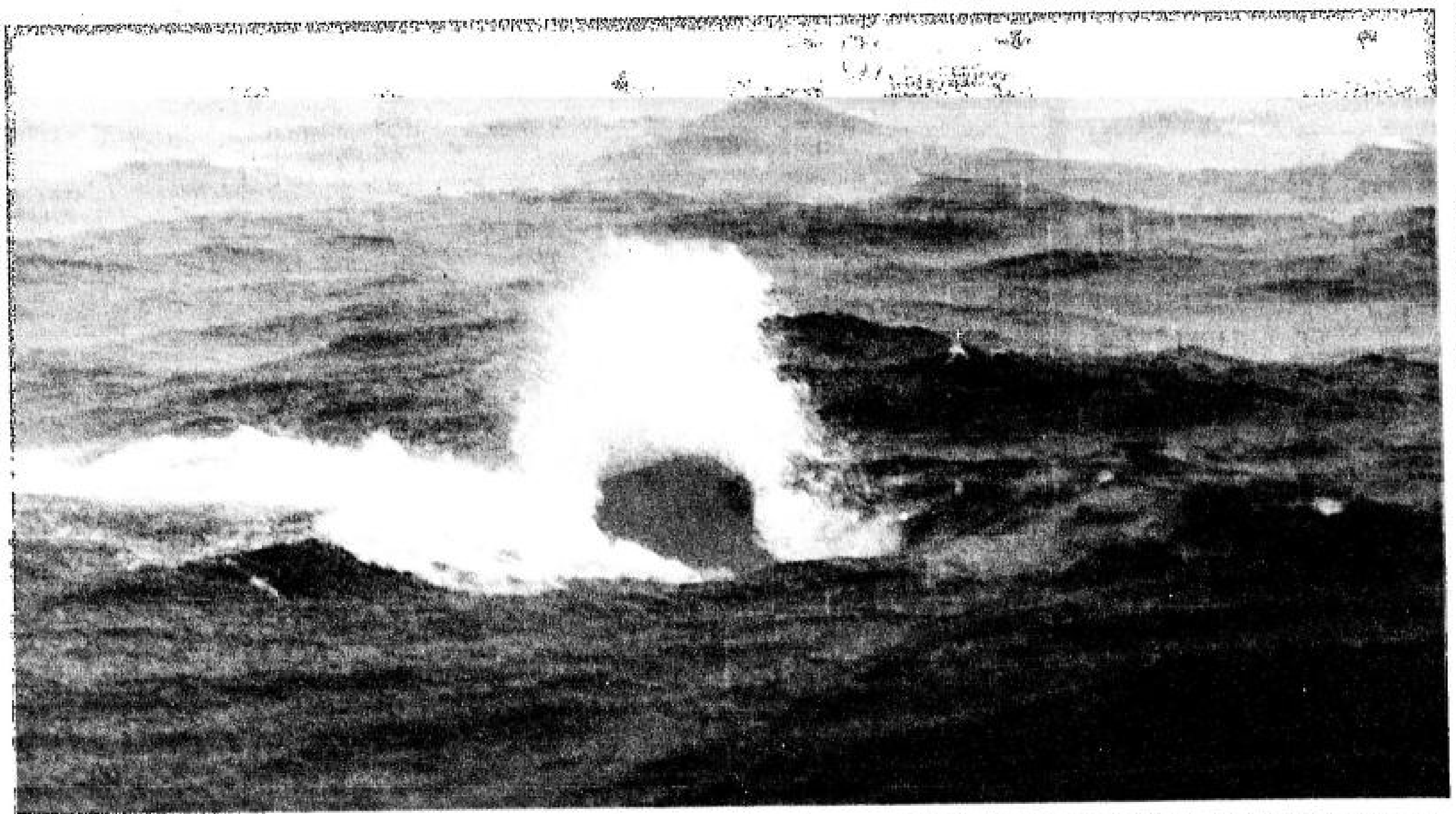
Two other vessels, including another motorized outrigger boat in Masbate and a motor vessel anchored off Tabaco port in Albay, also sank, with no reports of any casualties.

The two other fatalities in the storm were a couple who were electrocuted when they touched a live wire in their yard at Barangay Punta Mesa in Manapla town, Negros Occidental province, at 6;30 a.m. yesterday.

The fatalities were identified by the police as Army Berjamen, 30 and husband Romel, 34.

Army was on her way to feed their pigs when she touched the wire that had fallen from the post. Romel tried to rescue his wife but was also electrocuted, police said.

About 8,000 people were stranded in various ports after storm Caloy (international name Chanchu), packing maximum center winds of 100 kph and gusting up to 130 kph, made landfall on Thursday night and sliced across the country, forcing the Coast Guard to suspend ferry operations.



GOING, GOING, GONE: Only the hull of the MV Northern Samar remains to be seen as it sinks off the port of Tabaco, Albay while waiting to sail to Virac, Catanduanes. No passengers were on board as all seagoing vessels were grounded due to Typhoon "Caloy." JESS YUSON

6 survivors' flight delayed

Airport authorities cancelled 79 domestic and international flights, including many bound for provinces in Bicol and the Visayas.

The bad weather also delayed the arrival of six Filipino seamen who survived after their Greek-owned vessel sank in South African waters last week.

They were scheduled to arrive at 8:30 p.m. yesterday via Emirates Airways flight EK 334 from Dubai but the airline decided to cancel its flights from Dubai because of the typhoon, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) said.

The seamen's arrival is tentatively scheduled for 10:30 a.m. today.

Among the families evacuated were those in several villages in the town of Sogod, in Southern Leyte, where about 1,000 people were buried alive under a massive mudslide in the village of Guinsaugon three months ago.

Nine villages in the province were isolated by floods and landslides.

"It has been raining really hard, and we had about 130 millimeters (five inches) of rainfall yesterday alone," provincial Gov. Rosette Lerias said, adding that normal rainfall according to forecasters should be 550 millimeters in a week.

Storm warnings were hoisted in some 23 provinces and islands, including Metro Manila, where rain had fallen since Thursday.

Caloy weakens

The storm slightly weakened as it made landfall. By around noon yesterday, it was packing sustained winds of 95 kph, the weather bureau said.

An average of 19 storms and typhoons strike the Philippines every year, killing hundreds of people through floods, landslides, and other hazards induced by strong winds and heavy rain.

In the Bicol region, nearly 6,000 passengers, 172 vehicles and four sea vessels were stranded in seven major ports in the region as Caloy struck early yesterday morning, the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council said.

Caloy also toppled trees, cut off power and forced business establishments to close for the day, RDCC chair Chief Supt. Victor Boco said.

He said 4,148 were stranded in Matnog port in Sorsogon and 1,048 in Tabaco port.

Arnel Capili, Office of Civil Defense regional director, said power was cut off in Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate and parts of Camarines Sur.

Most of the fallen trees and branches blocking major highways in Albay were being cleared by emergency crewmen.

Jumped into the sea

More than 100 families were evacuated from five coastal villages of Legazpi, Mayor Noel Rosal said.

In Tabaco, the ship MV Northern Samar sank after it developed a hole on its side when strong winds battered it against the concrete port.

No one was reported hurt as people aboard jumped into the sea to save themselves.

The storm stranded about 2,000 people in Eastern Visayas and caused power blackouts in many areas lasting until yesterday morning.

At least 1,132 families were affected when nine barangays in Sogod were affected by landslide and floods, according to Rey Gozon, of the Office of Civil Defense.

As of 9 a.m. yesterday, Gozon said his office had received reports that 2,391 passengers and 134 vehicles bound for Luzon were stranded in ferry terminals in Allen, Northern Samar.

A local radio station reported that more than 4,000 passengers on board vehicles bound for Samar and Leyte and some parts in Mindanao were stranded in Matnog, Sorsogon.

In President Roxas town, Capiz, 54 houses were destroyed and one person was injured when a tornado struck the villages of Aranguel, Carmencita and Badiangon.

Heavy rains and strong winds cut off electricity in Iloilo City. Most of the streets were heavily flooded forcing offices to close early.

The Coast Guard cancelled trips of inter-island vessels in Negros Occidental.

The Coast Guard advised travellers in hard-hit areas to refrain from going to sea ports in the meantime since their vessels would not likely be able to sail.

Advice to travellers

The Coast Guard's Coyme said that instead of wasting time and money sitting around in empty piers waiting for ships or ferries, the passengers would have an easier time if they remained at home and wait for the announcement that the storm signal in their areas had been lifted.

"The best advice I could give passengers is to not go to the piers in the meantime, postpone their trip while Caloy is strong in their areas so that they won't waste time and money at the piers," Coyme said.

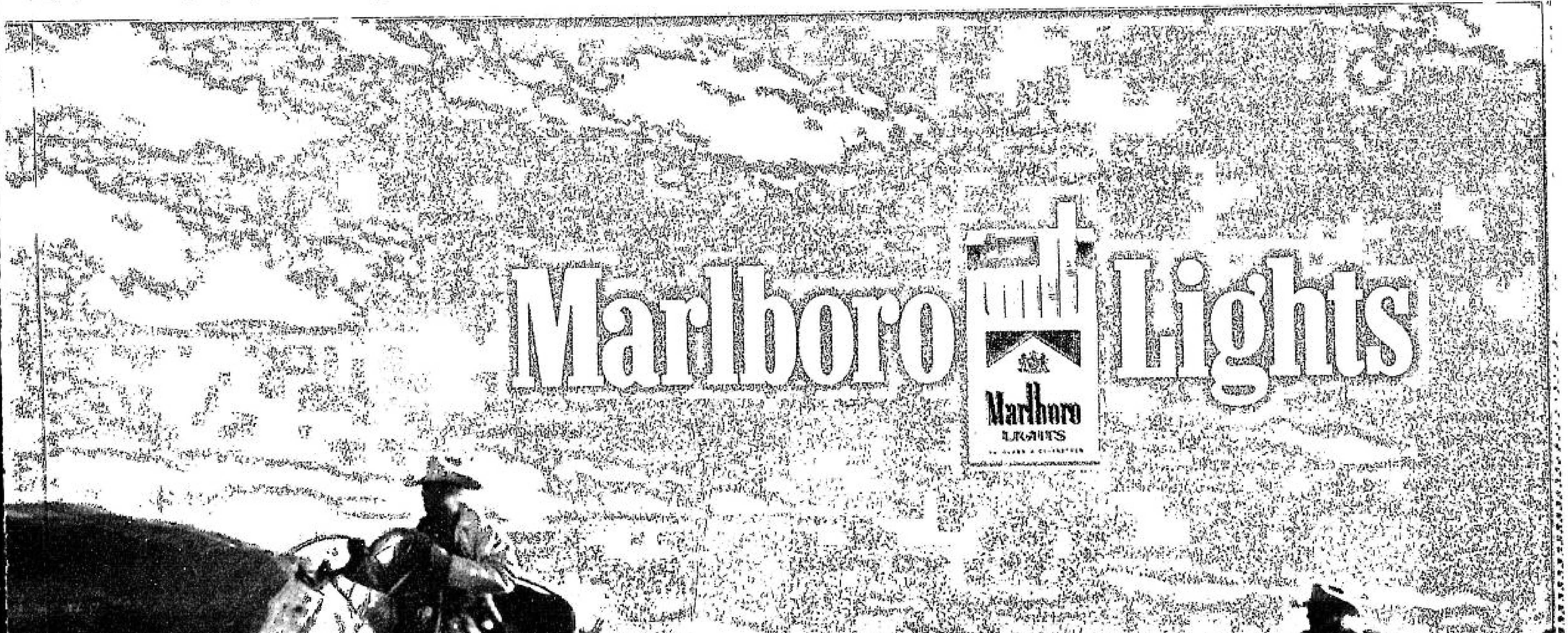
With storm signal No. 2 raised in most of the towns in Bicol and Eastern Visayas, the PCG suspended the voyages of vessels weighing 2,000 gross tons and below.

Coyme also said that the PCG had given its commanders in the provinces the discretion to suspend trips depending on weather conditions.

Relief operations

Several government agencies under the transportation department were ordered to assist passengers in southern Luzon and the Visayas who were stranded by the storm.

According to Department of Transportation and Communications Assistant Secretary Roberto R. Castañares, stranded passengers will receive assistance from local units of the Philippine Ports Authority, the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) and the Philippine Coast Guard. *With reports from Edgar Alejo, Mike Jaucian, Madonna Virola and Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Vicente S. Labro, Joey A. Gabieta, Jani Arnaiz, Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Carla P. Gomez, and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau; Nikko Dizon, Dona Pazzibugan, Daxim L. Lucas, Michael Lim Ubac*



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OPINION

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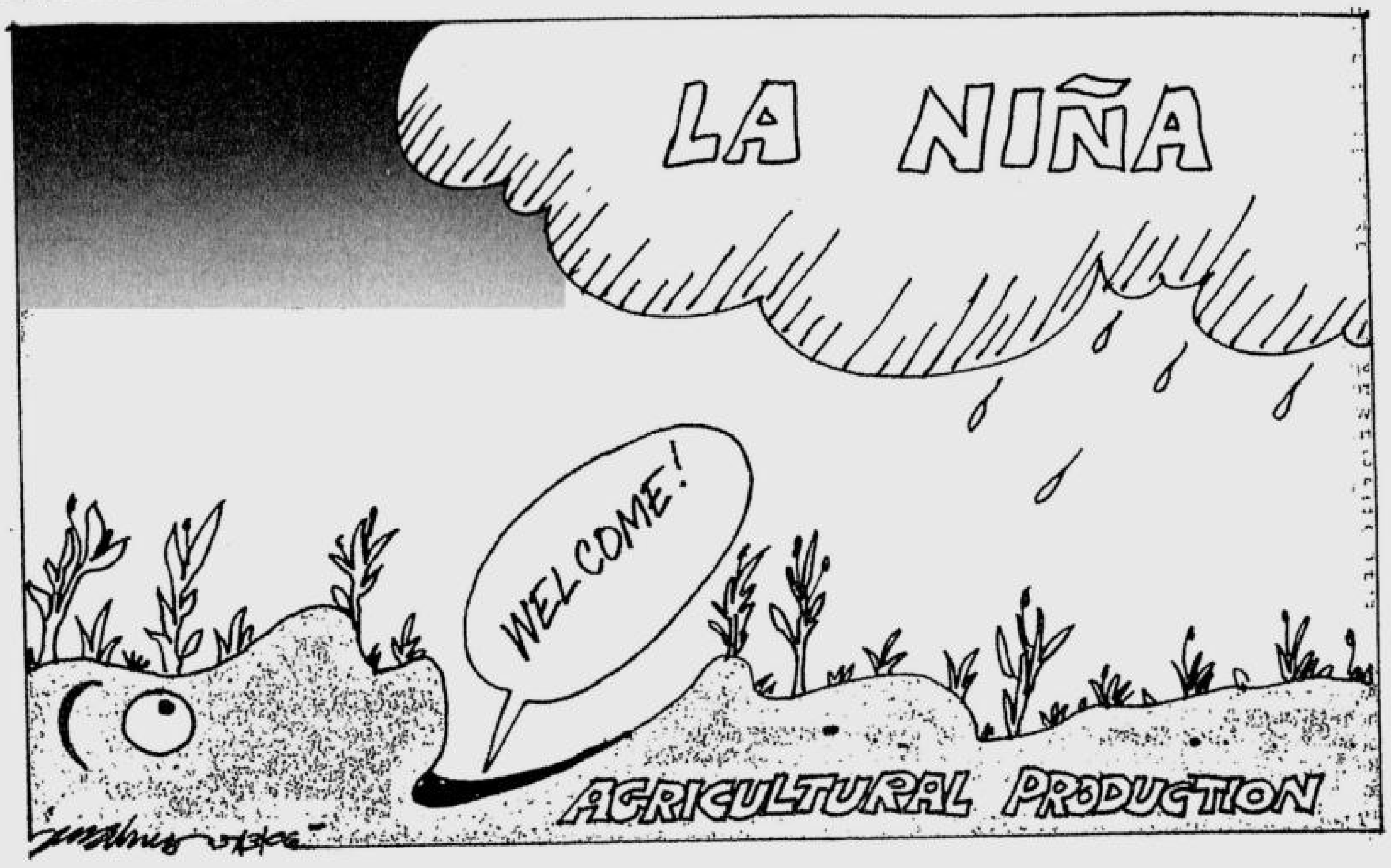

More of nothing

EDITORIAL

THE PROBLEM WITH THAT ASTONISHING report that the Philippine population growth slowed down to 1.95 percent is that it has not happened—or at least, not yet. That rate of growth was the projection made by the National Statistics Coordiantion Board—not for 2005 alone, but for the period between 2005 and 2010. In other words, that figure was the projected average annual growth rate for the period.

Another report posted on the NSCB website gives a slightly lower annual average growth projection of 1.94 percent over the same period. And it qualifies this by saying, "If the growth-rate trend is decreasing from 2.05 percent during the 2000-2005 period, then the 1.94 percent growth rate is likely to be attained around 2007-2008." Which means that if the growth rate hews closely to its historical trend, a 1.94 percent growth—or a 1.95 percent growth, for that matter—is still at least one year away.

The NSCB report warns everyone to be careful with these numbers, saying: "These values should be interpreted with caution as these are projections based on certain assumptions of fertility and mortality and are projected annual average growths for the periods given."

But few people seem to heed that warning, least of all administration officials. They have been acting as if the projections are already reality.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, for one, said the 1.95-percent growth rate has brought the country close to its target of 1.94 percent, the rate of growth which would allow the economy to feed the entire population. President Macapagal-Arroyo was pleased, and eager to chalk this up as another achievement of her administration. She congratulated officials of the Population Commission for the "significant drop" in the population growth rate, according to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

If the projections prove to be true, that would certainly call for a celebration. Right from the start of her presidency, Ms Arroyo set about to dismantle an already very feeble government population control program. Afraid to bring down the wrath of Catholic bishops on her government, she passed on the responsibility of carrying out the program to the local governments. Today, the national government's efforts to slow down population growth are "practically nil," said Prof. Ernesto Pernia of the UP School of Economics. Thus if there has been a quick deceleration in population growth, government must have done the seemingly impossible: accomplishing something by doing almost nothing.

No wonder, the President wants to do even less. She has ordered that funds earmarked for programs to bring down population growth be now channeled to other programs intended to feed the hungry, create new employment opportunities and spur economic activities, according to Health Secretary Francisco Duque. At the same time, Duque said, Ms Arroyo wanted to "aggressively implement the scientific, natural family planning methods."

The President wants to promote "aggressively" natural family planning methods while reducing already meager funds for population control? Can the administration be more confused than this?

Sharing burdens

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE DOHA ROUND OF GLOBAL TRADE TALKS UNDER THE World Trade Organization is faltering. An unprecedented confrontation between industrial and developing countries is bogging down efforts to push negotiations forward.

To save this round from failure, each country must share a burden commensurate with its economic power.

Industrial countries can easily handle the cost of a major concession. The United States, in particular, should reduce protections on its domestic farm produce. Japan also must make more contributions to reviving negotiations. It must be willing to make a bigger, braver offer, such as opening its rice market much wider to imports.

Tired of slow progress in the multilateral talks, industrialized countries are now tending to push bilateral and regional free trade agreements. Such moves will hinder many developing countries from benefiting from global trade because they have fewer competitive exports. If the WTO system loses effect, world trade will shrink, hurting industrial nations in the process. Leaders in the developed world must clearly recognize the importance of the multilateral talks and quit dithering to reach an agreement.

Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo)

Perpetuated but not immortalized

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

ONE OF MY THREE LAWYER SONS COMmented to me the other day that while going over the latest decisions of the Supreme Court, he came across many grammatical errors that I have mentioned a number of times in this column as commonly committed by our English-speaking citizenry.

I had tried to correct these lapses during my time on the high tribunal, without offense to my colleagues and, indeed, with gracious gratitude from them for my efforts to improve the grammar of our *ponencias*. It seems, though, that these infractions are back again on the present Supreme Court without a *negotiorum gestor* or a presumptuous do-gooder like me to correct them.

I recall with pride and satisfaction that I successfully urged the Court to stop referring to ourselves in the third person plural as was the self-inflated practice of our predecessors who saw nothing wrong with calling themselves "We" and their acts as "Our." Sometimes they even spelled the words in all caps as "WE" and "OUR" to magnify their conceit.

I observed that we were not the Queen of England or His Holiness the Pope whose exalted titles were universally accepted. Neither should we usurp the editorial "we" of the journalists who certainly wrote better than we did, especially when they were criticizing us. I added that the President of the Philippines and the members of Congress did not claim a similar artificiality, even assuming (for the sake of argument only) that they were as prestigious as we were.

My suggestion was unanimously accepted and consciously followed except on some rarer occasions when it was ignored by some justices who could not totally abdicate their royal pretensions. But the republican inhibition was generally observed, to give the Supreme Court a more democratic and less infallible image, besides making our *ponencias* more readable.

If I seem to have noted a resumption of the ostentation in the present tribunal, I hope I am mistaken.

Another affectation hooted out of our Supreme Court was the execrable "at this point in time" that became fashionable during the '60s. I especially detested that phrase and practically bristled when it was used during the oral arguments, particularly by the members of a big law firm obviously awed by the flunkies of President Nixon. The expression was banished from the American idiom after the Watergate scandal but remained with our impressionable Court like a nuisance per se.

"The petition is impressed with merit" is another pomposity that does not impress, besides being intolerably trite. Why not simply say that the petition "has merit" or "is meritorious"? And many justices are fond of using long words, probably thinking that polisyllabication (sorry!) is impressed with merit. They "asseverate" when they simply mean "state" and will never agree to shorten a *ponencia* when they can elongate it.

There is also the question of improper prepositions. When I chaired a board of judges to choose the best written decision of regional trial court judges in criminal cases, we automatically disqualified any entry where the accused was charged "of" a crime. The suspect is charged "with" and acquitted or convicted "of" the offense. We can accuse many judges "of" ignorance of these rules and scold them "for" this weakness. Even justices are not exempt "from" this discipline.

It is predictable that when a judge is dismissed by the Supreme Court, it will be because he is "unbecoming of" of his position. The verdict may be correct but the language is not. The justices probably never heard Bing Crosby sing "Moonlight Becomes You" to Dorothy Lamour. "Unbecoming" means "that does not become" as when a general is charged with "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." Notice the absence of the ubiquitous "of" in the familiar and grammatical indictment. It's like "I request a hearing," which does not need a "for" that many justices reverently apply.

When Shakespeare said "let's kill all the lawyers," it must have been because of their esoteric vocabulary with all its "hereinaboves" and "thereofs" that members of the bar use to parade their profession. I believe lawyers and especially justices could be more "regular guys" if they used plain ordinary language in settling disputes between the Party of the First Part and the Party of the Second Part.

Justices, for all the august intimations of their status, are ordinary mortals except for a supposed higher level of literacy. A befitting humility should instruct them that when they prepare their *ponencias*, they are not writing for posterity. Most decisions are, in fact, like ordinary news reports, read today and wrapping paper tomorrow. Holmes and Brandeis and Cardozo are brilliant exceptions to the ordinariness of jurists.

I beg the indulgence of the Supreme Court if I have been disrespectfully frank. Or unintentionally arrogant as if I were a snobbish know-it-all on the English language. I am not and have myself committed some of the imperfections I have mentioned here. My only purpose is to erase some of the common failings of the justices, including me, in writing decisions that are perpetuated in the SCRA but not immortalized.

Lies and statistics

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE SAYING "THERE ARE LIES, DAMNED lies, and statistics" is a very popular one, as is the charge that "You can prove anything with statistics." Someone even wrote a book titled "How to Lie with Statistics." The statistics that are being referred to here are what sociologist Joel Best, author of—what else?—"Damned Lies and Statistics" calls "bad" statistics. How do statistics become "bad"? According to Best, they are either born bad, meaning they aren't much good from the start because they are based on nothing more than guesses or dubious data; or they are mutant statistics—they become bad after being mangled or twisted, almost always to suit the purposes of the mangler or twister.

This week the public was treated to two examples of mangled statistics: one had to do with the results of an SWS survey on hunger; the other had to do with the NSCB projections on population growth.

Per the SWS media release, the percentage of Filipino families experiencing hunger—with nothing to eat at least once in the past three months—"reached a new record high of 16.9 percent in March 2006, equivalent to 2.8 million families—surpassing the previous peak of 16.7 percent in December 2005." The media went to town on this finding, with talk show hosts, editorials and commentators discussing the pronouncement as if it were gospel truth.

What's wrong with that picture? Well, there is the problem of "fake precision" (also called "spurious accuracy" and "false precision"). This fallacy occurs "when an argument treats (a piece of) information as more precise than it really is. This happens when imprecise information contained in the premises must be taken as precise in order to adequately support the conclusion." Given the margin of error (which is about plus or minus 2.1 percentage points for a proportion of 16 or 17 percent and a sample size of about 1,200), it is ridiculous to think, much less assert, that there is a difference between the December 2005 and March 2006 figures. But that is exactly what was done.

An objective/statistical analysis of the SWS quarterly data on self-rated hunger has to conclude that there is no significant change (i.e., significantly different from zero) in the hunger statistics between 2004, 2005 and the first quarter of 2006. What can be definitely said, however, is that there was a significant increase in the incidence of self-rated hunger between 2003 and 2004. More specifically, there was a very large and obviously statistically significant jump in that incidence between March 2004 and June 2004 (from 7.4 percent to 13.4 percent), and even from November 2003 to June 2004 (9.4 percent to 13.4 percent).

What the data also show, by the way, is that the SWS self-rated hunger incidence for 2003, at 7 percent (error margin +/- 1.4 percent) is significantly lower than the official 10.4 percent (error margin +/- 1.7 percent) "subsistence incidence" as computed by the NSCB for the same year—which is rather ironic, because government statistics are generally suspected of painting a brighter picture than the real one. Subsistence incidence is the percentage of families whose incomes are less than what is required to purchase the caloric requirements of the family—which presumably means that they go hungry.

The other case of mangled statistics has to do with the data on population growth rates. The tables in the NSCB website show the projected, not the actual, population growth rates for the country, based on what they call "medium" assumptions regarding fertility and mortality rates. (That the projections go up to 2040 makes this obvious.)

Nothing to get excited about, until someone adopted the colossally stupid idea of treating those projections as if they were the real thing. Worse, a high government official, who should know better, was reported as noting that the "latest population growth rate" was nearing the government's medium-term target of 1.94 percent—which means that he swallowed it hook, line and sinker, implying that there is nothing to worry about insofar as population growth is concerned.

Is there a one-to-one relationship between projected and actual data? No. From 1980 to 1995, for example, projected population growth rates for the period were higher than the growth rate that actually occurred. From 1995 to 2000, however, actual growth (2.36 percent annually) was greater than projected growth (2.21 percent).

Is the projected decline in population growth rate realistic? We're talking about 2.34 percent from 1990 to 2000, down to 2.05 percent from 2001 to 2005, down to 1.95 percent from 2005 to 2010. Think of it: the actual population growth rate remained the same between 1980 and 1990 (2.35 percent) and between 1990 and 2000 (2.34 percent). Without a population program in place, there is no realistic basis for assuming that the growth rate will just fall to 1.95 percent.

Two cases of mangling statistics. Yet it is noteworthy that there were immediate—and adverse—reactions to the way projected population growth data were treated like actual population growth data. But the equally misrepresented hunger data seem to have been unquestioningly accepted. Could the difference in the reactions have to do with the fact that in the population case, the mangling would have put the administration in a good light; while in the hunger case, the mangling put the administration in a bad light? One wonders.

Will Drilon yield to Villar?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO, UPON her return from a trip to Saudi Arabia with the President, made the not surprising assertion that she and some other senators would be willing to participate in a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution. Her condition is that the Supreme Court rule as constitutional a joint vote by Congress on Charter change, and not a separate vote by each chamber. The issue of how Congress ought to vote has long stalled the Charter change drive, but now Santiago has tossed the challenge to the high court. This is logical. More senators are expected to come out in support of Charter change and even the shift to a unicameral legislature if the Supreme Court categorically rules that joint voting as valid.

* * *

Santiago's challenge buttresses the belief of many citizens that in reality many senators support the shift to a parliamentary system despite their vocal anti-Cha-cha stance, for they realize that the presidential system has not worked for our country. I suspect many of them are just waiting for the right cue, and Santiago's challenge may be it. Two weeks ago, Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula filed a bill seeking to convene Congress as a constituent assembly. Santiago should file a counterpart bill, while a citizens' group should file a petition in the high court to get the ruling. Let's bring this issue to a head now.

* * *

There's speculation as to whether Senate President Franklin Drilon, who's still on a trip to Africa, would honor the gentleman's agreement he forged with Sen. Manny Villar at the beginning of the first regular session of this 13th Congress. Recall that after the May 2004 elections, which found the administration coalition with a total of 14 senators, they forged an agreement blessed by GMA, whereby Drilon gets the top post for the first two sessions, and Villar will have it during the last session. The reasoning was that Villar should be given that opportunity in 2006-2007 since he would be up for reelection.

Looking into the Senate equation, I suspect Villar can count 10 votes. His core supporters are from the "Wednesday group" that includes himself, Francis Pangilinan, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, but I think he will also have on his side Pia Cayetano, Lito Lapid, Miriam Santiago and Bong Revilla, and perhaps Juan Flavier and Juan Ponce Enrile. I'm including Flavier because when there was a rumor of a coup in the Senate, he said he recognized the "*usapan*" for the third regular session and would rather wait for it.

* * *

One indication of where the wind might blow may be the steady refrain from the Drilon camp that "whoever has 13 votes gets the top post." Put this together with the statements of Mar Roxas and Rodolfo Biazon that they did not sign that agreement and it could mean that Drilon would not give up his post but leave his fate to his colleagues. In other words, the gentleman could be eclipsed by the political gladiator. I don't know, however, if Drilon could ignore public opinion which would perceive him as reneging on his word.

* * *

Assuming Villar would have to fight for it, he would need three more votes. The focus would be on Senators Ramon Magsaysay, Richard Gordon and Edgardo Angara. In 2004, Magsaysay supported the gentleman's agreement, but Gordon has been vague about his views on it and Angara has been quiet. If Drilon decides to fight, he doubtless will get the votes of the seven opposition senators. But I suspect that Villar could appeal to Sen. Fred Lim because *may pinagsamahan sila*. If he gets Magsaysay, Angara and Lim, he bags the post.

For now, however, it's *pakiramdaman* in the Senate, which resumes its session on Monday. The fight for the Senate presidency will come to a head by the middle of July, just before the President's address before Congress.

* * *

The Senate's history on gentleman's agreements on leadership has been quite interesting. I recall once calling the 19-month *hatian* as the "pregnant solution." My notes tell me that soon after the May 2001 elections, GMA's forces were wrapped up in the leadership fight with four contenders: Rene Cayetano who had four votes, Drilon with one vote, Villar who had his former House colleagues and Noli de Castro, and Aquilino Pimentel with two votes. I recall that GMA was for Drilon largely because she had chosen Teofisto Guingona as her vice president over him, and she wanted to make it up to him. But Cayetano's political strength did not make it easy to make that choice.

GMA sought neophytes Pangilinan and Recto for their support for a sharing formula between the contenders. The decisive swing bloc was the Wednesday Group, some of whose members initially wanted to play hard to get. Villar cautioned them, however, about being perceived as the cause of trouble, so one day, they trooped to the Palace to offer their vote for GMA's choice. But in deference to Cayetano's role in the Estrada impeachment trial, the formula was one and a half years for each contender.

* * *

But fate intervened. Around 2003 when Cayetano fell ill, I recall that he told Villar to go for what would have been his time at leadership, but the latter didn't want to do that. Drilon, too, was overheard saying after Cayetano's demise that his agreement was with the latter, though he also insisted that anyone who has 13 votes could have his job.

It's understandable that Drilon would seek to lock up the Senate presidency for himself. In the event of a vacancy in the top two posts, such as what his group and his allies have sought to provoke on various occasions, he'd be the acting president tasked with calling elections within 45 days, in which he may run. But he may also just want to bow out in glory. He finishes his second Senate term in 2007, and his only option is perhaps to challenge Raul Gonzalez Jr. for congressman or MP of Iloilo City.

'Dandansoy'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT'S EASY TO BE TRANSPORTED BACK TO MORE genteel and innocent times while watching a *zarzuela* revival, even if your main entertainment fare during childhood already consisted of TV cartoons and hazy footage of old Tagalog movies.

I think the *rondalla* has a lot to do with it. As soon as the *rondalla* from the Bacolod City National High School (BCNHS) entered the RCBC Theater and started playing, all workday concerns vanished. Immediately, one was brought back to a provincial fiesta, the music triggering racial memories of partying in a clearing beneath the shade of mango trees, basking in the breeze, and downing *tuba*.

That, in fact, is how the *zarzuela* "Dandansoy—Ang Gugma ni Dansoy kag Rosing (The Romance of Dansoy and Rosing)" opens, with a harvest celebration in a sugar plantation, where the main leads Dansoy and Rosing meet and fall in love, and in doing so breach the economic and social divides that had kept them in their separate worlds.

"Dandansoy" is really a contemporary *zarzuela*, with a storyline fashioned to accommodate traditional Ilonggo songs, but the main plot element, the thwarted romance of lovers from opposing ends of the social spectrum, is a staple of popular entertainment.

"Do not expect a happy ending," warned Raymond Fuentes of the Tourism and Performing Arts Society (Tapas), the Bacolod-based group that supports cultural efforts like this *zarzuela* revival. "This is about unrequited love, which many love songs are about."

Indeed, "Dandansoy," and "Ahay Kalisud," the most popular songs in the *zarzuela* and beloved staples of the Ilonggo repertoire, are all about longing and regret, of love lost and frustrated, of the pain of parting and the futility of forgetting. Pair the plaintive voices of the young singers with the soulful strings of the *rondalla*, and you have a moment of bittersweet catharsis.

* * *

"DANDANSOY" was staged the other evening as part of this year's celebration of National Heritage Month, which has as its theme "Viva Zarzuela." The Filipino Heritage Festival Inc. spearheads the celebration, with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Department of Tourism. It is co-sponsored by PLDT and BPI Foundation.

When they sent out a call for *zarzuela* troupes that could stage this local form of theater for this year's festival, the organizers were directed to Tapas, which has helped stage "Dandansoy," under the direction of Aaron Sorbito with libretto by his wife Salome, based on traditional Ilonggo songs compiled by the late Msgr. Manuel Dormido.

Bambi Harper, festival director, said they plan to bring "Dandansoy" to different college campuses in Metro Manila. Another *zarzuela*, "the only Pampango *zarzuela* to my knowledge," said Harper, will also be staged as part of the festival in San Fernando. During the festival's launch in Ilocos Norte earlier this month, part of the entertainment was the staging of excerpts from two Ilocano *zarzuelas*, one of them along the same storyline as "Dandansoy"—about two lovers across the social divide, and another more recent creation with slightly risqué content.

Indeed, the *zarzuela*, a very popular form of mass entertainment that drew audiences around the turn of the century and before the War, retains its hold on the Filipino sensibility, appealing as it does to Pinoy sentimentality and fondness for doleful melodies and lyrics.

* * *

LOCAL talents bring "Dandansoy" to soulful life. Mary Luz Casas, dusky and with a sprightly presence, portrays Rosing, while Joseph Gebusion is a stocky and earnest Dansoy. Jeffrey Delmo and Hannahmel Inventor are Laloy and Pepang respectively, the couple's best friends and allies; while Jose Pepito Esgra and Mae Dolores Montano are Rosing's parents.

An interesting point about the storyline is that the romance between the young people is thwarted because while Dansoy is a mere field laborer, Rosing is the daughter of a plantation manager or *encargado*. This means the social divide isn't too wide, since Rosing's family could be considered upper middle-class, at best. But then, perhaps if Rosing was the daughter of a haciendero, Dansoy would end up not just broken-hearted but possibly dead!

But there is more to "Dandansoy" the *zarzuela* than just the hackneyed storyline and the doleful music. The proceedings are enlivened by dances (choreographed by Gerard Guanzon) that range from Spanish-era polkas and waltzes to vignettes that seek to dramatize the feelings conveyed by the characters.

Noteworthy, too are the costumes which are eye-catching and colorful, without upstaging the performers. Costume designer Doreen Dofitas deserves recognition for this.

* * *

WHILE we're not Ilonggo speakers, my husband and I were able to follow the proceedings, thanks largely to the program that contains a synopsis of "Dandansoy" and translations of the various songs. But even without these guides, it's still fairly easy to sum up the dramatic action, though the succession of sad songs toward the end proves at times tedious and predictable.

But when Rosing and Dansoy launch into a duet of "Ahay Kalisud," the drama reaches an emotional peak, the romantic tension between the two palpable and moving. In fact, some members of the audience could be overheard singing along with the performers, turning the *zarzuela* staging into an intimate, shared experience.

The *zarzuela*, even contemporary revivals of it, may no longer reach the heights of popularity it enjoyed in more innocent and genteel times. But an evening spent basking in the songs, music, dances and sensibilities of long ago is enough to remind us just how rich and substantial our cultural heritage is, and can be, if only we care to preserve it.

New alliances for a new century

WORLD VIEW

Donald Rumsfeld

IN 1970, I TRAVELED TO EGYPT AS PART OF A delegation representing the United States at the funeral of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Back then, Egypt was closely aligned with the Soviet Union. When we arrived in Cairo, it seemed that everywhere one looked there was evidence of the Soviet presence: Soviet tanks, missiles and troops.

During the visit, we were scheduled to meet with Anwar Sadat. No one in our delegation was sure what to expect, given the uneasy relations between our two countries at the time. To our surprise, Sadat told us that he, in fact, had respect for the United States. The reason? As a young military officer, he had visited our country and had had an excellent experience.

And, indeed, within two years of taking power, Sadat expelled the Soviets from Egypt and began to build a friendship with the United States that, despite challenges and periodic differences, has proven important and valuable ever since.

I mention the importance of these military-to-military relationships because the United States in this new century is undergoing a significant transformation of its military arrangements and partnerships around the globe—necessary adjustments based on the new realities, and new threats that have emerged since the end of the Cold War.

It is important to note that since 2001, the United States has probably done more things, with more nations, in more constructive ways, and in more parts of the world, than at any other time in its history.

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush helped fashion and lead the largest coalition in history—80-plus nations—to fight the global war on terror. Furthermore, roughly 60 nations are currently cooperating in the Proliferation Security Initiative to prevent dangerous weapons and materials from being transported to terrorists or outlaw regimes.

There has been a rethinking of the structure and role of our traditional military alliances, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which is setting up a new Nato Response Force and has moved outside Europe for the first time with the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

The focus of attention today is on Iraq and Afghanistan. But in future decades, priorities will change. And much of what we may be called on to do in the future will likely be determined by choices made by others.

Consider Russia, a nation with vast natural resources, an educated population and a rich heritage of scientific and cultural achievements. Like the Americans and others around the world, the Russians are threatened by violent extremism. Russia is a partner of the United States in some security issues, and our overall relationship is the best it has been in decades. But in other ways, Russia has been unhelpful—using energy resources as a political weapon, for example, and in their resistance to positive political changes in neighboring countries.

The same holds true for China. The Chinese people are educated and talented, and their country has great potential, with high economic growth rates and an industrious work force. Nonetheless, some aspects of Chinese behavior remain unsettling and complicate our relationship. Last year, a US Department of Defense report noted that China's defense expenditures appear to be much higher than acknowledged by the Chinese government. Coupled with a notable lack of transparency, this understandably concerns China's neighbors.

In addition to the choices that these and other countries make, America's own choices will be an important factor in determining what kind of future it faces. From time to time, US public sentiment has opposed playing an active role in the world and fulfilling our commitments to allies—and, indeed, to the cause of freedom. In the early 1970s, as US ambassador to Nato, I remember having to fly back from Europe to testify against a legislation in our Congress that would have pulled US troops out of Western Europe and Nato, just as the Soviet Union was in the midst of a huge military buildup.

Today, nations that were members of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact, as well as some of the former Soviet republics—countries that we used to call "captive nations"—are valued members of Nato and represent some of our most stalwart allies in the War on Terror.

This did not happen by accident or by chance. Looking forward, I am convinced that if we have the wisdom, courage and strength to adjust long-standing strategic arrangements, embrace new partners, and, above all, persevere in the face of adversity and difficulty, we will see a similar victory in this "long war" against violent extremism and the other threats that may emerge in an uncertain new century. ***Council on Foreign Relations and Project Syndicate***

Donald Rumsfeld is the US secretary of defense.

Woman in uniform

YOUNG BLOOD

Carlos Erwin I. Fajardo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I USUALLY SEE HER IN HER POLICE UNIFORM. SHE stands with dignity and honor, always ready to serve and protect. She walks with grace and always makes herself available to listen to the complaints of victims of crime or oppression as well as to those who are in need. But to us, her children, she is one tough mama.

She lays down the rules in our house and enforces them. Every day, we have specific missions to accomplish. She has clearly identified our positions and ranks—from older brother or older sister down to the youngest. Household chores are assigned in an orderly fashion.

When she comes home from work, she conducts a thorough inspection or a tactical interrogation to find out if we accomplished our missions. If we failed to do so, she is transformed into a preacher giving a long and loud sermon. When she's angry, it's as if our house is being shaken by thunder and lightning even if the day is bright and sunny. Sometimes, I feel like we were in a jungle being stalked by a roaring lion.

She is a strict disciplinarian. She always reminds us that if we violate the law, especially the Revised Penal Code, she would not help us and, instead, she would personally put us behind bars.

She does not want us to have any vices. Smoking and drinking are absolutely forbidden. And we cannot file a petition for review or a TRO because, in our house, she is the chief justice.

When I attended our high school acquaintance party, she parked the patrol car nearby and kept a watchful eye on the proceedings. She even used her flashlight to find out the identity of my dancing partner. Later she wondered how we could hold an acquaintance party in a place that seemed to have a solar eclipse.

She cannot always be at home, but she makes sure that her orders are carried out faithfully. Our house is always on red-alert status. And our chief conducts regular briefings on how to avoid kidnappers, robbers, thieves and other people with evil intentions. "Be always alert and use your common sense" is one rule she has hammered into our heads.

But behind her tough measures and her strict nature lies a golden heart. She has sacrificed so many things, including her personal comfort, just so there would always be something on the table. She rarely buys new clothes or shoes for herself so she can save the money for our schooling. Her dreams and desires she has set aside so we can pursue our own dreams in life.

When she isn't on duty, she goes to a reflexology and healing center that caters to the sick in both body and spirit—again so she can serve others and earn a little more for our family.

My father, who was also a policeman, died when I was 3 years old. He was killed in an ambush staged by New People's Army rebels in Bukidnon. Since then, mother has been sweating blood to feed her children.

Although she's very strong, there were times when I saw her crying in her room. I think those were the times when she needed my father most, when she felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of being both mother and father to us. Or those were the times when people spread ugly gossip about her or mocked her dream of seeing us all through college.

Sometimes I cried, too. I wished I could help her, but I was still a child then. During those difficult moments, I nurtured the idea of exacting revenge. I dreamed of becoming a soldier so that I could go after the rebels who had killed my father. But by God's grace, I didn't become a soldier. Instead, I was led into a seminary, and later I became a teacher. I am convinced that God makes things happen for a reason.

It is very difficult to have a policewoman for a mother. There were times when we needed her and she could not be around. Although time and again she would explain to us that her job demanded a lot of her time and that we must understand that, there were still times when her presence seemed to matter more than anything else but she couldn't be there. At such times, we could be sure that she was doing her duty and going about her noble task of protecting the lives, property and rights of her fellow Filipinos. I am sure that on those important occasions, she wanted to be there with her children and it must have broken her heart to be away from them when they needed her most. I am sure that on such occasions she shed tears.

Yet she remains steadfast and strong. She is focused on her job, knowing that's the only way she can provide for our needs.

Now we have all finished college. But none of us followed in the footsteps of our parents.

My mother remains in the police force. She serves as the officer of the women's and children's desk in a town in Bohol. Most of her time is dedicated to working on cases involving child abuse, violation of women's rights and domestic and family conflicts.

I feel sad when people label all cops as bad and corrupt, because there are still many who remain faithful to their oath and loyal to the service. There are those like my father who died bravely in the line of duty but whose families were inadequately compensated for their loss. And there are those like my mother who sacrifice the time they should be spending with their children to answer the call of duty.

When we were still children and we saw mother don her combat fatigues, we felt nervous and afraid. We prayed hard that nothing bad would happen to her.

I'm grateful to my mother for showing us how to deal with the hardships of life. She built a house for our family without anybody's help. She did all she could to keep our family together and well, even without our father. There were times when she felt discouraged or defeated, but she would pick herself up again for the sake of her children. To us, her children, she is the general who taught us to obey the laws of God and men. It is a privilege and a gift to have her as our mother.

Carlos Erwin I. Fajardo, 29, is a teacher and a second year student at the Arellano University School of Law.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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A figment of the imagination

THE NEWS ITEM "PNP SAYS MOST killings in media solved" (PDI, 5/6/06) quoted the Philippine National Police as saying that more than half of the media murders recorded since 2001 are now considered "closed" and "solved." This is highly misleading and we would like to clarify the matter.

The police consider a case "solved" once they have identified the suspect and filed the corresponding case in court—never mind that they have not arrested the suspect(s); never mind that they have not gathered enough evidence to make the case prosper in court.

To cover up its failure, the Arroyo administration consistently echoes this claim of the PNP—that most of the media killings have been solved—as if its mandate ends at the law enforcement level. It is clear that the Arroyo administration ignores the true measure of effective governance, which is an efficient justice system.

According to the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility's database, 28 journalists were killed in the line of duty since 2000. More than half, 16, of these killings have been "solved" by the police. However, in only one of the cases (the Damalerio murder) has there been a conviction. Four are still on trial, six are yet to be prosecuted and five have been dismissed.

The failure to pursue the cases is mostly due to the failure of the Department of Justice to successfully prosecute the accused. For example, the dismissal of the murder charges against the masterminds behind the killing of Marlene Esperat was primarily due to the recommendation of Cotabato City prosecutor Tocod Ronda, who was assigned by the DOJ to prosecute the case despite the fact that he had served as a defense lawyer for the suspected masterminds in a previous case, also involving Esperat.

In the case of Rolando Ureta, Aklan assistant provincial prosecutor Apolinar Barrios dismissed the complaints for lack of probable cause, despite strong testimony from witnesses.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye has boasted that Malacañang has put up P5 million to help solve the media killings. He should have verified first if that fund had been released. Despite all the fanfare, not a single peso of the fund has been released to the DOJ or the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists (FFFJ)—either for the witness protection program or for aid to the families of the slain journalists, as promised. Like the "solved" cases, the fund remains a figment of the imagination.

In fact, the FFFJ had to source funds from its network of international media organizations to help finance the murder trial of Esperat. The government did not provide for the cost of transporting the witnesses from Tacurong to Cebu.

—RACHEL E. KHAN,
deputy director,
Center for Media Freedom
and Responsibility,
Secretariat, Freedom Fund
for Filipino Journalists,
Ateneo Professional Schools-Salcedo,
130 HV dela Costa St., Makati City

Supreme Court not firing computer-illiterate judges

JUSTICE ANTONIO T. CARPIO, CHAIR of the Supreme Court's Committee on Computerization and Library, is one of the key figures in the Court's modernization efforts. A passionate advocate of the use of technology to improve the efficiency of our courts, his proposals—which include the establishment of the E-Library—have done much to bring our courts into the information age.

His recommendations, however, do not include firing computer-illiterate judges for "gross ignorance," as reported in the news item headlined "Low-tech judges could be fired for gross ignorance" by Delmar Cariño. (PDI, 4/27/06) This we would like to clarify.

Justice Carpio discussed the Court's various modernization initiatives at the Seminar on the Philippine Judiciary and Action Program for Judicial Reform for the Media, held on April 24 at the Baguio Country Club. When asked about the possible problems faced by judges who are unable—or unwilling—to learn how to use computers, he facetiously remarked "I told them, we will stop sending printed copies of the circulars, the rules, the decisions. We will send (them) only the CD. If (they) don't know how to open the CD, then (they) stand the risk of being charged with gross ignorance of the law. That is one way of forcing them to learn how to use the computer."

In other words, judges will be compelled to make an effort to familiarize themselves with computers, because those who aren't up-to-date with the latest jurisprudence as a result of their reluctance to use new technology—which places the latest decisions of the Supreme Court as well as all the laws at their fingertips—run the risk of drafting decisions inconsistent with law or jurisprudence, giving rise to the possibility of their being suspected of "gross ignorance" of the law.

Another matter that needs to be clarified is the section of the story that discussed the Court's use of its franking privilege to send copies of its decisions and circulars to judges. Justice Carpio was quoted as saying that their thickness actually turns them into cargoes. What Justice Carpio said, again in the spirit of good-natured banter, was: We have this franking privilege with the Post Office, we send our mail for free but when we deliver the printing materials, the Post Office says, "that's not mail, that's cargo." We told them, under the law, we (the Court) have franking privilege and we interpret that to be mail.

We hope this clears up whatever misconceptions that may have been caused by that news report.

—ISMAEL G. KHAN JR.,
assistant court administrator and chief,
Supreme Court Information Office,
Supreme Court, Padre Faura, Manila

Airport security: feel the difference

AFTER READING THE NEWS STORY "Pinoy-Swiss strips down to shorts at Naia," (PDI, 5/3/06) I thought I was going to have an upset stomach from laughing. This is what we get when we have an airport security which is "overkill." And I don't think that was the last of it unless we improve security procedures in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and in all of our airports.

I believe we are the only country where a person has to pass through five or six security checks before he or she can get to the boarding gates. I've seen and heard of a lot of tourists expressing frustration with having to undergo the experience. A foreigner's guide (that can be accessed through the Internet) to traveling in the Philippines calls attention to the frustrating security procedures at the Naia, specifically those applied for departing passengers.

If the Naia or the Department of Tourism thinks that with these procedures they assure would-be tourists of a "safe Philippines," well, they better think again because they're actually sending the wrong signal. How can foreign tourists say the Philippines is a safe place when one thing they'd remember is the excessive number of security checks they encounter on their way not only out of our country but also to their destinations inside the country?

So why don't we just improve the security procedures at airport entry points and make the passenger go through only one "good" security check? Having too many security checkpoints only shows that the authorities themselves don't trust the procedures. I suggest that the people in charge of airport security should try becoming tourists themselves and observe the security measures in other airports (e.g., Bangkok International) so they can see and feel the difference.

—MARLON SANTOS,
marlonus28@yahoo.com

Distorted mindset about jobs

RE: "FAIRS NO match to employment shortage." (PDI, 4/30/06) Is it not high time to seriously evaluate our educational system to see if it is really answering the need of our country for skilled workers?

There must be drastic changes in this system. And one of these is how to change our students' mentality. It is time that they came to realize that white-collar jobs are no better than skilled jobs.

God bless the INQUIRER in its important job of helping our people think.

—SR. MELINA POLO,
zustermelina
@hotmail.com
Willebrordstraat 73,
The Netherlands

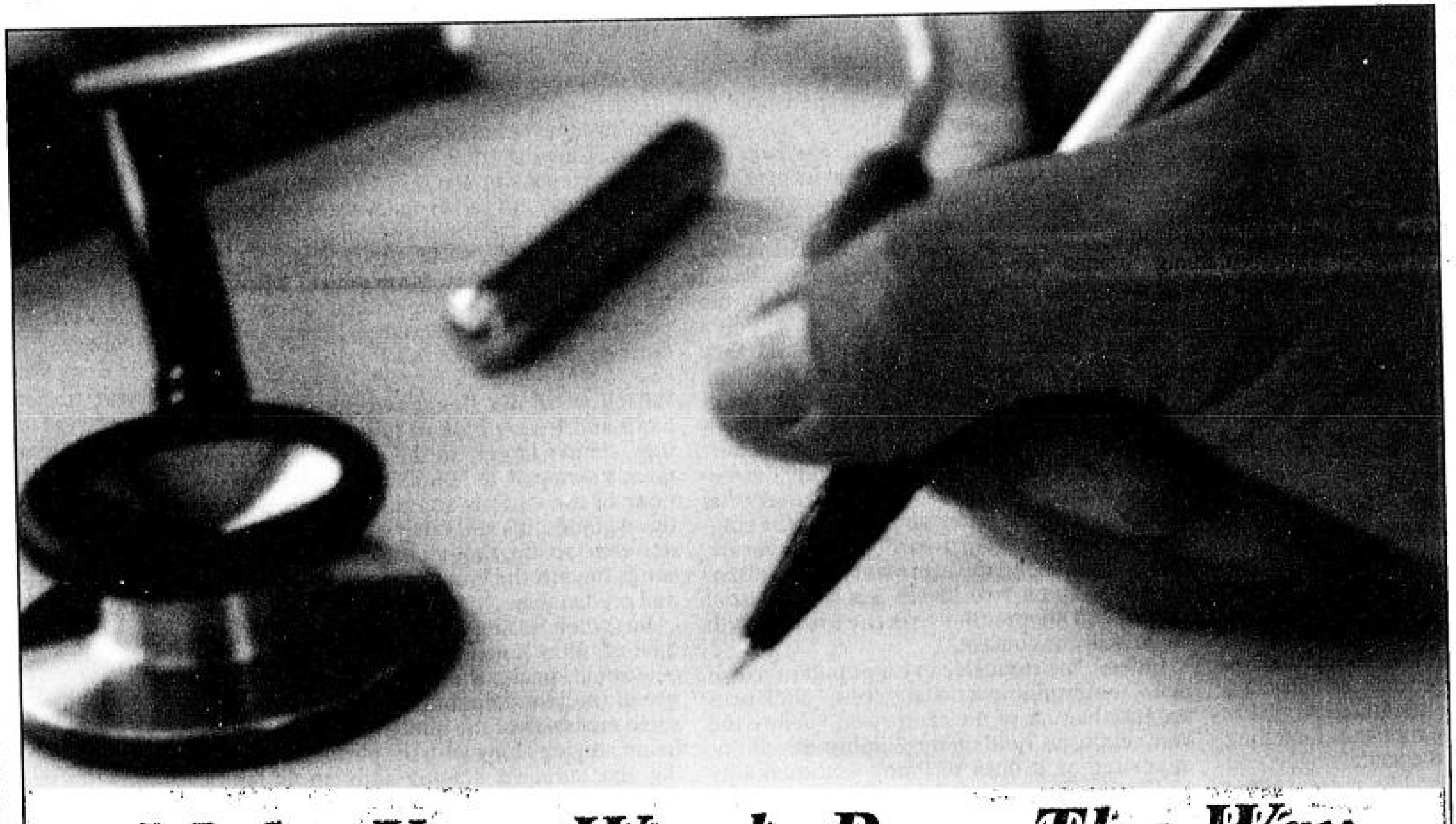
Not just Filipinos

I DON'T KNOW WHY there's so much fuss about Filipinos going abroad to work. I have been working in Saudi Arabia for 23 years, and over here I have worked with citizens of the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Ireland.

These people come from countries that are far more economically stable than the Philippines, and yet they still come to Saudi Arabia because of the higher salaries. If they come to Saudi Arabia for the higher salaries, why shouldn't the Filipinos?

Every year we have lots of graduates who are ready to fill the vacancies that are left by those who go abroad.

—RIZAL MADLANGBAYAN,
madlangbayan52
@yahoo.com.ph



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The old 'casa' and Sitio Ubos

By Gavin Sanson Bagares
Tagbilaran City

ON APRIL 29, THE CASA ROCHA-SUAREZ Heritage Center, now a lifestyle museum on A.M. Torralba Street in Sitio Ubos, Tagbilaran City, celebrated its first anniversary, and the occasion marked yet another rite of passage for the house that has been home to at least six generations of Rochas.

For Ubos, it has been a resurrection from near obscurity.

The Casa Rocha-Suarez was built between 1837 and 1839, and its appearance might have changed a little through the years, except for the alteration in the roof line, from a stately pitched nipa thatch to a low-slung nondescript tin—probably a renovation casualty in the 1970s.

Up the narrow staircase of the en-fronted edifice, one enters a commodious living room and sees the details of a lovingly crafted house: the posts of whole trees carved in a vaguely oriental design, the generous ceiling that give the rooms a certain grace, and the big sliding windows, opening to welcome the sea breezes of night or closing to ward off the glare of day through the nacreous filter of *capiz* shells.

Family treasures

There is an abundance of *brocante* throughout the house, but one can find a rare antique: an Ah Tay bed (named after the Chinese furniture maker of Old Manila whose trademark is the unmistakable squash design on the posts and base) holds sway in one of the bigger bedrooms.

And here and there, in the galleries, one finds mementos of the house that had made it special, like the art deco signage announcing the business of Hermanas Rocha, or the appurtenances of baking, including the fancy cookie molds; and, the faded photographs that recall a bygone age.

At Christmastime, if one were lucky enough to visit, an elaborate Nativity tableau or *belen* is on display. Many of the pieces are made of ivory and said to be 18th-century style. The tableau is reminiscent of the many old *belen* of Cebu, of which the entire Bohol was a dependency until 1864 (a fact confirmed by historian Jes Tirol).

The Rocha "Belen," for example, can well rival Cebu's very best, that of the family of the Cebu Diocese's first Filipino bishop, Juan Gorordo y Garces.

The house of Rocha gave Tagbilaran many of its illustrious sons. It had at least one *gobernadorcillo* (mayor) in Don Felipe Rocha, one two-term provincial governor in his son, Don Fernando Rocha, and yet another modern-day mayor of direct descent from the gentlemen.

Don Fernando had the benefit of higher learning in Manila, and before his foray to big-time politics, he ran a private school. Only that of his sisters may have equaled his fame as an *ilustrado*, the well-educated one, among the Tagbilaran *principales* or elite.

Filomena operated a general store on the ground floor of Casa Rocha-Suarez, later memorialized by one Tagbilaran mayor, Honorio Grupo, as "a bazaar, drugstore, hardware store, and *sari-sari* store put together."

Two other siblings, Gregoria and Concepcion kept themselves busy with a bakery operation most famous for its *hojaldres de* Hermanas Rocha. This prize-winning pastry has impeccable antecedents in Cebu.

The French traveler, Jean Mallat, writing in 1846, observed that "their (Cebu bakeries') puff cakes called *ojaldres* are of a delicacy that would do honor to the best pastry cooks of Paris ..." Clearly, the Rocha ladies had carried on a grand tradition and made it their own.

A period of eclipse

World War II put an end to Hermanas Rocha. The family itself began to settle in Manila in the 1950s, leaving the house shuttered and dusty for decades.

Yet, another descendent was to bring honor to the family with the appointment Pablo Rocha Suarez as ambassador plenipotentiary to Malaysia, China and the US. The late ambassador, who also served as undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs before his death in 1993, is the Suarez in the Casa Rocha-Suarez name.

The plight of Casa Rocha-Suarez has been similar to the other old houses in Sitio Ubos, itself a truly historic site. Strung along the length of A.M. Torralba Street are 19th-century residences in various states of disrepair or ill-use. One of them has been completely obliterated by a Manila antiques dealer.

The remaining homes are those of (current occupants only) a Swiss citizen, the Beldia family, and the Yap family. And a mysterious old building, halfway between a shed and a barn, occupies the lot between the Yap and the Swiss's homes.

The Swiss's house itself used to belong to the Rocha family. Evidence also shows that at least one more house in Ubos once belonged to them.

Pariancito

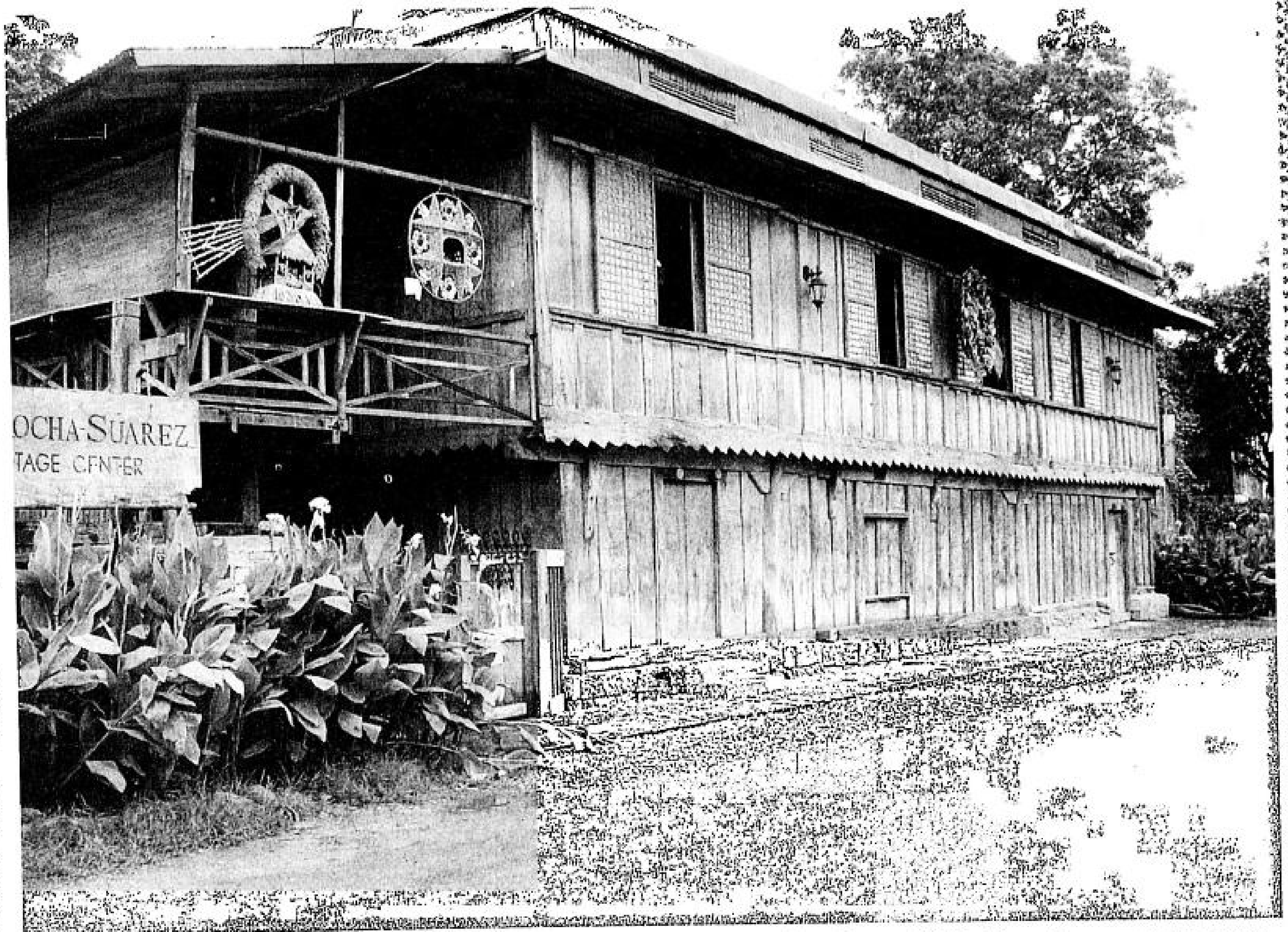
Journalist John Jasper Cortes wrote that "around 1830, the merchants of Tagbilaran descended to the lower part of the city, at the back of the St. Joseph Cathedral, when the *moro* (sic) raids along the coastal areas of Bohol were quelled."

They built substantial houses of *cal y canto*, an upper-class house of strong materials, which Mallat wrote, "generally belong to mestizos." (Mestizo in Mallat's time referred only to those of Chinese ancestry and the racial mix was reckoned patrilineally through generations. Mestizo to refer to the Spanish half-caste was a later development).

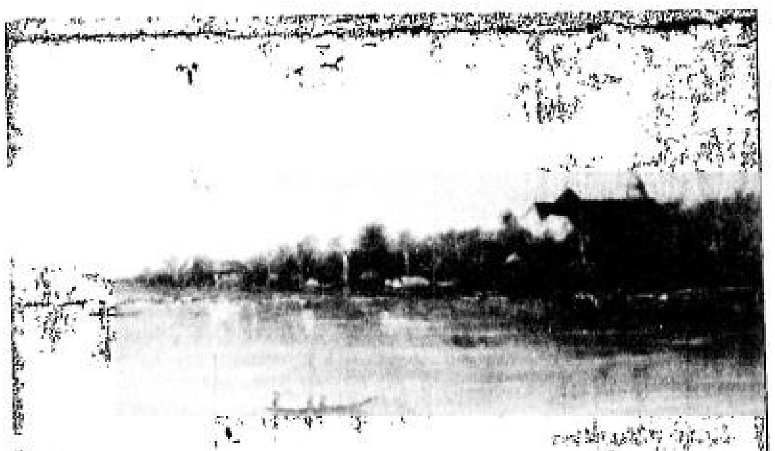
An 1885 document at the Philippine National Archives states that two Butalid sisters and their Rocha sister-in-law (as can be inferred) sold one such house of *cal y canto*—*"situada en el sitio de Ubos"*—and a small boat to a gentleman of the Tagbilaran *principales* surnamed Calceta.

The house was located on land surrounded on two sides by sea.

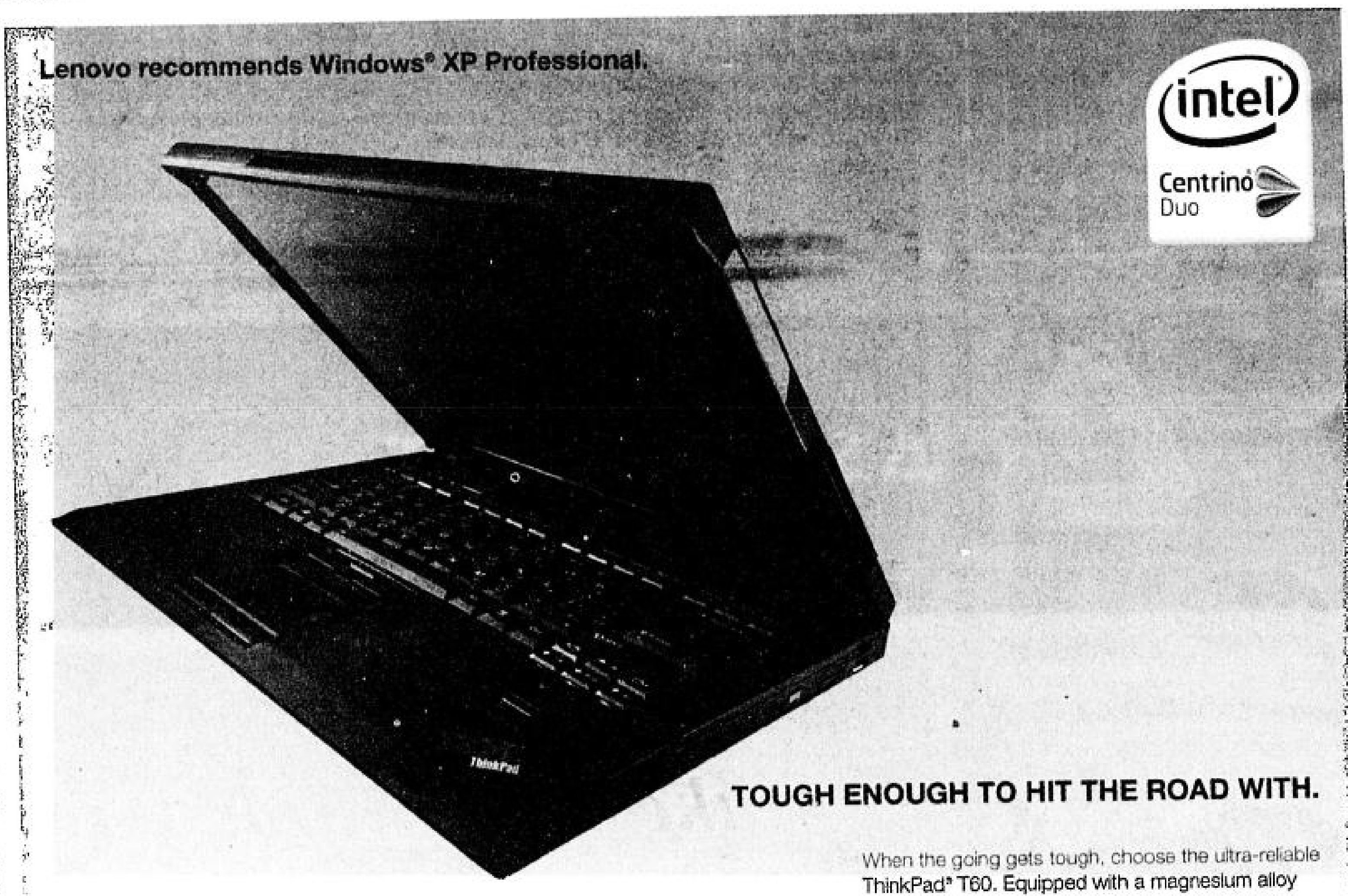
THE OLD/ A16



THE OPENING last year of Casa Rocha-Suarez Heritage Center (above) has generated new interest in Sitio Ubos, where many houses were built in the 1830s.
PHOTOS BY GAVIN BAGARES



A VIEW of Sitio Ubos from Dauls across the Bohol Strait, a commercial waterway, in the 1920s from a detail of a ceiling painting by Cebuano Raymundo Francia. Francia was acknowledged as "one of the best painters in Visayas and Mindanao." He painted most of the churches in Bohol, but only some in Cebu.



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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Sweet victory for new head of Asian center for fisheries

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Tigbauan, Iloilo

WHEN HE AND A NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS resigned in June 2004, he said in jest that he will return to the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (Seafdec) as the chief.

His words came true because last April 18, Dr. Joebert Toledo, Ph.D., was appointed as the chief of Seafdec's aquaculture department, succeeding Dr. Rolando Platon, Ph.D., whom he and some 40 other colleagues criticized for mismanagement and lack of direction in leading the fisheries research institution.

The Philippine government recommended Toledo but his appointment was signed by Seafdec secretary general Dr. Siri Ekmaharaj after the concurrence of Seafdec council directors during their 38th meeting in Brunei Darussalam on April 18 to 21.

Established in 1967, Seafdec is a regional treaty organization of 10 countries—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It has departments in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. The Philippines hosts the aquaculture department in Tigbauan.

For Toledo, it was a delayed victory of what they have fought for two years ago, and sweeter still because he had competed against Platon in the selection process. Platon was seeking a sixth term.

"It was a sort of vindication of what we did, but then I told everyone that I come in peace," he said.

Toledo's return to Seafdec was low-keyed. There was no turnover ceremony or installation rite. His presence has raised fear of possible retrenchment or difficult assignments for the employees who stayed on or were loyal to Platon. There were also talks of the return of those who left, some of them senior scientists.

But Toledo said he can't just bring them all in because Seafdec's finances are affected by the Philippine government's budgetary cutbacks. From P199 million in 2002, Seafdec's budget was slashed to P100 million in 2004 and the succeeding years, resulting in scaled down research and extension work. Retrenchment also followed suit, reducing the employees from 300 to the current 82.

In his vision statement, Toledo said he would "actively seek external fund sources," and that Seafdec's facilities will be used to generate income. He said there was money in biotechnology research that Seafdec can cash in on, given its state-of-the-art biotechnology laboratory.

He planned to launch radio and television programs to broadcast aquaculture information from Seafdec. He also wanted Seafdec scientists to mentor students and teachers in local universities and colleagues on doing research.

Toledo, 45, holds a Doctor of Agriculture and Master of Science degrees from Hiroshima University in Japan. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Fisheries at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Toledo worked with Seafdec from 1981, rising from research assistant to scientist and then department chief. He has done studies on grouper and finfishes. As a scientist, he won awards for various researches that were published in national and international peer-reviewed journals, some of them winning awards.

When he resigned from Seafdec in 2004, he served as consultant in various aquaculture companies and fisheries associations here and abroad. He also worked full time in his fish hatchery in Oton and Guimbal towns.

The old . . .

From page A15

(Was this the one bought by the antiques dealer?)

And, incidentally, the same document classified "Doñas" Butalid and Rocha, and the Calceta "don" as "*mestizo sangley*" or Chinese mestizo.

Ubos was apparently a Pariancito, a little Parian. The Parian was a Chinese and mestizo ghetto and, like those of Cebu and Manila, markets for, among other things, quilts from cotton and cotton gauze.

Again, Mallat had this to say: "... with the cotton they (Boholanos) harvest they manufacture cloths of great solidity: they also weave some cloths of silk of which we have seen beautiful examples."

Interestingly, the profession of the aforesaid Rocha woman was that of the "*ilandera*" or spinner of yarn for cloth production.

The Rocha ancestors' choice of Ubos clearly demonstrated their mestizo backgrounds or their vocation as merchants. Don Felipe Rocha was one such "*comerciante*" in 1872.

Ubos was sandwiched between the commerce of the old public market (now defunct and long supplanted by new ones) beside the cathedral and the trade at its shoreline fronting the Bohol Strait, thus profiting from business of both upland and waterway.

Government must help

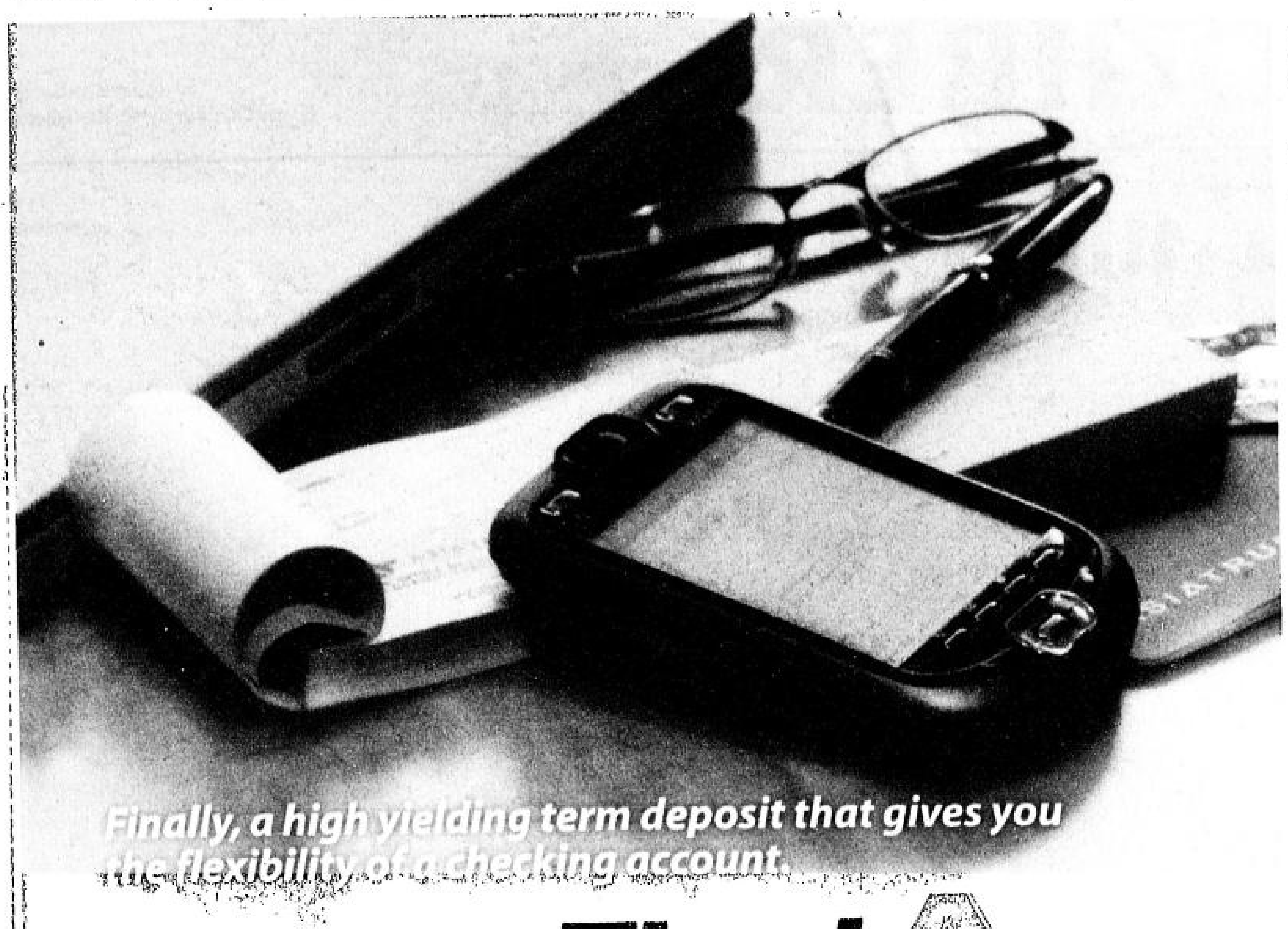
The work began at Casa Rocha-Suarez will hopefully provide a catalyst for the rehabilitation of Ubos, from a slum to a magnet of tourism.

The genteel Swiss citizen and Ubos resident suggests that the government must help further this cause not only by providing funds, expertise or muscle to help maintain the old houses (and encourage homeowners to do so), but by exerting political will as well in quelling the fresh tides of informal settlers and in relocating the old ones.

This would also mean their strict enforcement of building codes.

They would like to see the day when the now obstructed view to the beach is cleared, and the sea breezes once again flow back freely into the old houses.

In the end, it is not only tourism that will benefit, but also the Boholano soul.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2 slain after planting bomb in mall

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—TWO SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF A terror group linked to the Jemaah Islamiyah were killed in a clash with police on Thursday night shortly after they allegedly left a box containing two rifle grenades with a timing device outside SM City at the North Reclamation Area here.

Supt. Paul Labra, chief of Cebu City's Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (CIIB), said Ali Usop and Datu Niel Ulama were identified through the ID cards found inside their wallets.

He said based on the information forwarded to them by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region, Usop and Ulama were part of a group whose hideout in Marikina City was raided by the CIDG-NCR last April 27.

Chief Supt. Eduardo Gador, police director for Central Visayas, confirmed that the two were members of the Rajah Sulayman Group (RSG), that belongs to the Jemaah Islamiyah-linked Abu Sayyaf.

In a separate interview, Supt. Nelson Yabut, one of the team leaders of the CIDG-NCR that raided the hideout in Marikina, said they were coordinating with police in Cebu City to identify the two slain suspects.

He, however, said only his boss, Senior Supt. Asher Dolina, CIDG-NCR chief, knew the background of the two suspects.

He added they failed to arrest anyone during the raid but their targets were RSG members.

The RSG is composed of Christians who became Muslims. The group has ties with the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesia-based regional terror group, which has been linked to the al-Qaida international terrorist network.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales earlier said a group of Muslim converts with ties to the Jemaah Islamiyah was the biggest "headache" in the antiterror campaign.

Last April 27, a team from CIDG-NCR raided a one-story bungalow at No. 21 Champagne St. in SSS Village, Marikina City.

Although no one was arrested, the police team recovered six grenades, an improvised explosive device and other bomb materials.

Labra said mall goers saw Usop and Ulama leaving a box outside the glass entrance of SM City at 8:53 p.m.

The security guard then called the attention of SM management, which in turn, alerted the Mobile Patrol Group (MPG).

A team from the MPG arrived and saw the box. The group then called the Special Weapons and Tactics team.

PHIL ARMY
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REUTERS

PRACTICE
Soldiers preparing for a United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping mission in Haiti and Liberia subdue a colleague who was playing the role of a rebel during exercises in Zamboanga City.

C. Luzon transport groups fight over routes

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Public transport groups in Central Luzon's seven provinces have not applied for fare increases despite the high costs of fuel, but disputes over routes have erupted recently.

Lawyer Robert Peig, regional director of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, said three conflicts over routes and several more applications for route amendments were pending in his office.

The three cases involved about 500 bus and jeepney drivers in Bataan, Tarlac and Angeles City.

The problem arose because the certificates of public convenience issued to drivers gave general descriptions of routes.

These allow drivers to venture into areas covered by other groups, Peig said. "The issue is mainly about the competition for passengers," he said.

There are at least 68 authorized routes for buses and 452 for jeepneys, data showed.

Peig said he has asked the LTFRB national office to approve his proposal to "rationalize all routes" in Central Luzon. This is to ensure the viability of operations in the region by transport groups, he said.

The LTFRB regional office, he added, is also coordinating with local governments on the routes that have been revised due to traffic management schemes.

The task of regulating the routes of tricycles, even their licenses, is within the power of the local governments.

Applications for route amendments are happening in areas where big shopping malls have mushroomed, Peig noted.

In the case of SM Clark, which is scheduled to open on May 12, he said his agency can only act on cases only after the Clark Development Corp. has issued endorsements to jeepney drivers wanting to service that area. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Fraternity hazing claims another victim in Capiz

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—A 21-YEAR-OLD fifth year electrical engineering student of Capiz State University (CapSU) here died due to fraternity hazing.

Jan Angelo Dollete, of Phase 2 Milibili Heights in this city, was declared dead on arrival at the Mambusao District Hospital (MDH) in Mambusao, Capiz.

He was brought in by four unidentified persons riding in a red jeep early Sunday, MDH personnel said.

The victim's father, Jesus Dollete, 50, the Philippine Coast Guard detachment commander, said his son's body was covered with bruises and he strongly believed that he died due to hazing.

The cause of his death, however, will not be known until today when the National Bureau of Investigation releases the result of an autopsy it made on Angelo's body.

Jesus said his son asked and was granted permission on Saturday to go to the birthday party of his friend in Sapian town, some 25 km here.

He said he never suspected that his son would be in any trouble as Angelo, a member of a school band, was "a very good and soft-spoken son."

Lolita Dollete, 42, said she did not worry at first when her son failed to return home the following day as they thought he opted to stay overnight with friends because Angelo's girlfriend was from Sapian.

She said the family only became worried when they heard over the radio that a man with Angelo's description had died and was abandoned at MDH.

Lolita said she went to the Laguda Funeral Home in Mambusao where the body of the victim was brought and found that it was her Angelo.

Jesus said he found that his son has been trying to join the Alpha Phi Omega International Fraternity through a letter found in his closet. He said the APO fraternity has a chapter based in Filamer Christian College here.

Plans drawn to make RP world's retirement haven

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—What can help stop the mass departure of Filipino health professionals and convince them to stay in the country and earn the same amount they would have earned abroad?

Bring their jobs to the home front and invite foreign retirees to live in the Philippines by making it a "retirement haven," said the chair of the Philippine Retirement Authority.

"Reversing the migration" was how former Philippine National Police chief Edgar Aglipay, PRA chief, called that thrust alongside generating investments and employment.

"In the future we would like to bring back our caregivers, doctors and nurses so they can help in the medical and health care system of the Philippines. At the same time that they are here, they are also earning the same amount they are earning abroad," Aglipay said.

This would keep the families of overseas Filipino workers together, he said, referring to the social costs of labor migration.

Aglipay said a sector servicing elderly people could be "another leg" on which the country's economic development could stand on at a time when China is leading in manufacturing and India is topping the information technology market.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

He said the retirement market teems with big potentials considering that there are 200 million retirees worldwide.

Japan alone has 30 million elderly people, Aglipay said, and getting just a tenth of that figure "would be big enough."

But to get this whole thing on track, Aglipay said the private sector would have to get to invest more in developing retirement villages.

Enthusiasm has picked up, with SM Prime Holdings joining what he called the "major retirement village service providers."

SM Prime, Aglipay said, will build a retirement village on its 8,600-hectare property in Nasugbu, Batangas, in five to 10 years.

The estate, Aglipay said, is "as big as Angeles City."

He said SM Prime has built a four-lane road to the Nasugbu property.

The Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales already has two retirement villages—the Silvertown and Ayala-owned Anvaya Cove.

After Thursday's blessing of the SM City Clark, Aglipay invited local officials in Angeles City and Mabalacat to look for 100 hectares of land as possible site of retirement villages. He promised the officials that he would link them with private investors.

Established in 1985, the PRA, as an arm of the Board of Investments, met the "unfortunate thing" of being only a visa processing office, Aglipay said.

The PRA contributes about P100 million yearly in income tax from the P20,000 to P50,000 contributions of enrollees and P2,000 processing fee.

"Today, we would like it to be a catalyst for us to become a retirement haven in the world," Aglipay said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

New ARMM body exec

COTABATO CITY—The Regional Legislative Assembly in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has a new chief following the resignation Monday of RLA Speaker Hatimil Hassan due to the demand and volume of his work as chair of the mainstream Moro National Liberation Front. Except for Assemblywoman Noranha Tulawie of Sulu, who was sick, the 24-member lawmaking body was one in endorsing Assemblyman Paisalin Tago as Hassan's successor. Tago, 38, is former RLA speaker pro-tempore of Lanao del Sur's first district.

Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bataan town cop killed

ABUCAY, Bataan—The chief of this town police's drug enforcement unit was gunned down near the town hall on Friday. Abucay police chief Senior Insp. Joel Tampis said SPO4 Reynaldo Raymundo, chief of the municipal drug enforcement unit (MDEU), was coming out of a barbershop at past 9 a.m. when four men armed with .45 cal. and 9 mm guns shot and killed him. Tampis said the police were looking at Raymundo's campaign against illegal drugs as reason for the murder. The communist armed group Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan, however, claimed responsibility for the slaying of Raymundo. Cris Baluyot, spokesperson of the RHB in Bataan, told the INQUIRER on Friday that Raymundo was killed for allegedly coddling illegal drug pushers.

Greg Refraccion and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

3 suspected robbers slain

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Three suspected highway robbers were killed in a shootout with policemen at past 1 a.m. on Friday in Angeles City. Supt. Napoleon Cauyan, chief of the Traffic Management Group in Central Luzon, said the five-minute clash ended the one-hour pursuit from Lubao, Pampanga, where the suspects hijacked a 10-wheel truck. Cauyan identified two of the slain suspects as Lolito Gomez and Arguelles Domingo, said to be members of the Ilonggo Group. A fourth suspect fled toward Porac, Pampanga. Police recovered the truck loaded with P1.5 million worth of soya products due for delivery to Binalonan, Pangasinan.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

5 Taiwanese vessels impounded

STA. ANA, Cagayan—A team from the Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources have impounded five Taiwanese vessels for allegedly poaching along the Cagayan and Isabela coasts. A sixth vessel has escaped. Eighteen crew members of the boats are now facing charges for poaching, according to Jovita Ayson, BFAR regional director. The vessels were fishing for yellow fin tuna and blue marlins when the team pounced on them. "They are swarming our Philippine waters because this is the mating season of tuna and marlins," Ayson said. The team also seized the fishing gear and several hundred kilos of tuna and blue marlins from the Taiwanese, Indonesian and Filipino crew members.

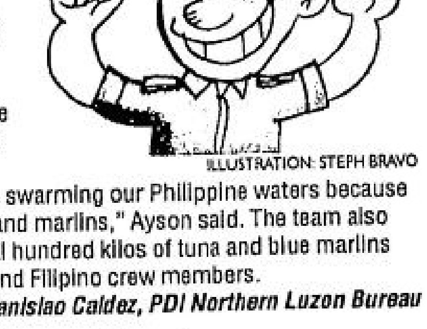

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

New Tarlac State U president

TARLAC CITY—In a ceremony that also marked the centennial year of the founding of the Tarlac State University, Dr. Carlito Puno, chair of the Commission on Higher Education, installed on Wednesday the university's fourth president. Dr. Priscilla Viuya, who was elected president by the university board of regents on March 22, is the only woman president among state colleges and universities in Central Luzon. She graduated cum laude in 1968 from the Philippine Normal College (now Philippine Normal University) with a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education. She finished her Ph.D. in philosophy and educational history as a university scholar at the University of the Philippines.

Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk

3 nabbed for marijuana

BAGUIO CITY—Police arrested three men for possessing 8 kilograms of marijuana bricks worth about P200,000 here last week. One of the suspects, Garet Cadley, 26, was arrested as he received P2,000 from a police agent who posed as a buyer on Naguilian Road here on May 7. Cadley's companions, Danny Tulabis, 22, and Jun Dangle, 23, were later arrested after police found marijuana bricks in their backpacks.

Shayne Anne Basco, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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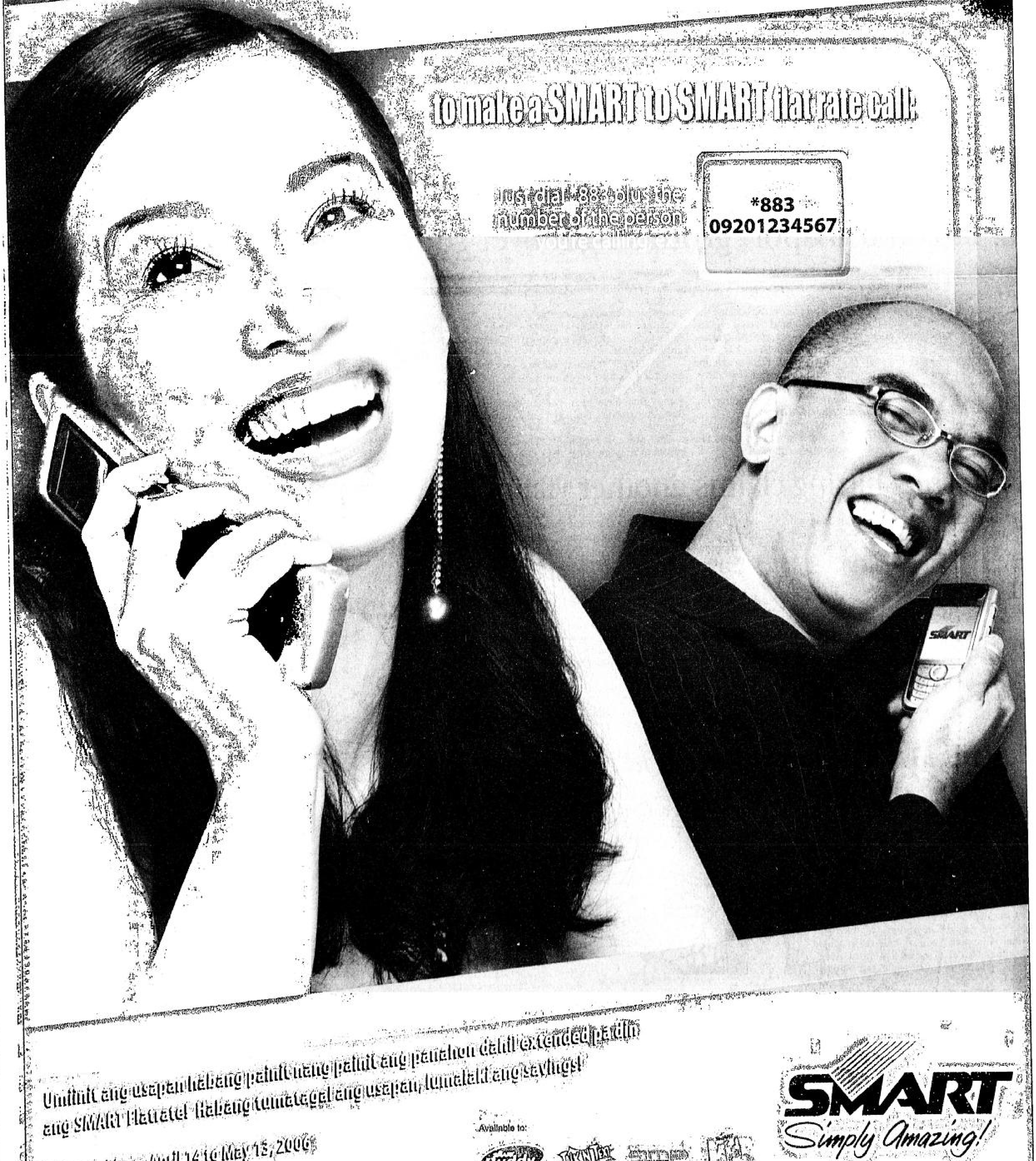

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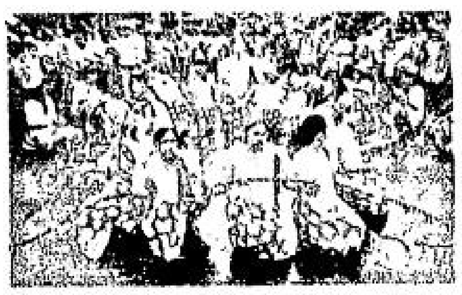
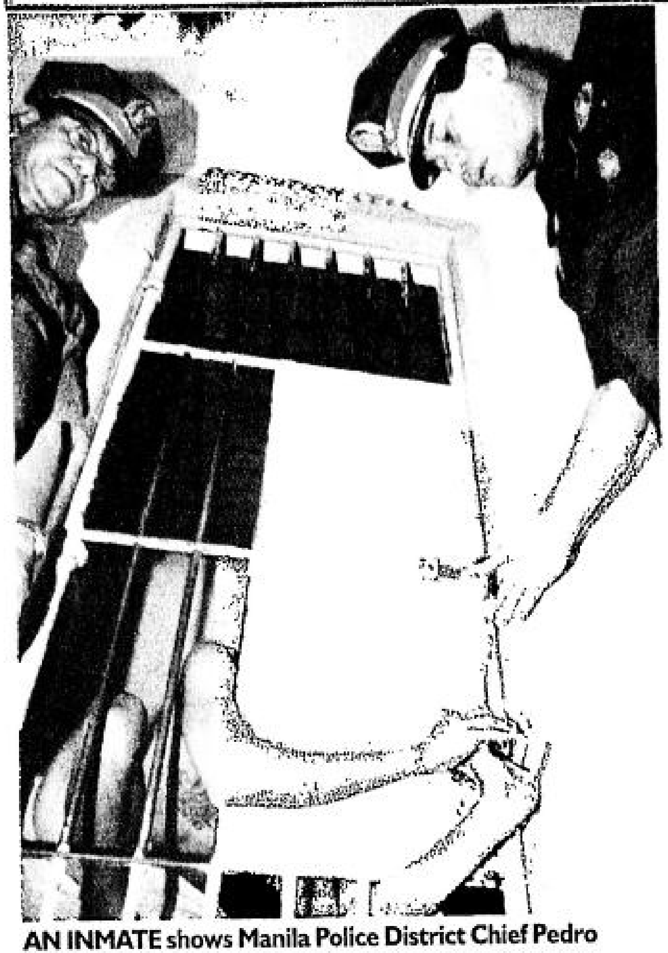
WHAT'S INSIDE

- Was buy-bust operation in Manila legitimate? /A20
- 3 policemen nabbed for Parañaque disco murders /A20
- It rained on their parade, but show went on for San Roque revelers /A20





AN INMATE shows Manila Police District Chief Pedro Bulaong and station 7 commander Superintendent Arturo Paglinawan show how he picked the cell lock of their detention cell.

REM ZAMORA

17 inmates escape from Manila jail

5 recaptured, 1 surrenders to cops

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SEVENTEEN INMATES OF THE MANILA POLICE District Station 7 escaped early yesterday morning by picking the lock of their cell. Five of them were recaptured hours later while another gave up to authorities.

It was a rude welcome for Supt. Arturo Paglinawan, who reported for work yesterday as the new chief of the police station.

The inmates, detained at the Jose Abad Santos police station in Tondo for drugs, rape, and petty crimes such as snatching, theft and gambling, sneaked out of their cell at around 3:15 a.m.

"There was no indication that the inmates used force in their escape," Paglinawan told reporters in an interview.

He added that the suspects may have used a pick lock in opening the cell door, contrary to the claims of some inmates that they used a steel pipe to destroy the padlock.

After unlocking the cell door, the detainees passed through the station's back door. The ensuing noise alerted deputy station commander Supt. Vicente Tan and night shift duty officer, SPO4 Renato dela Cruz, who prevented the remaining eight inmates from escaping.

The escapees were Jonathan Pantig, Christian Garcia, Ariel Dollente, Jaime Salcedo, Roberto Macalalad, Rolando Alba, Roosevelt Bondoc, Divino Jimenez, Rolando Bautista, Florecel Gutierrez, Edwin Magusara, Marlon Fernando, Roy Serrano, Sonny delos Reyes, Rolando Dizon, Jonathan Poreda and Carlito Relox.

Garcia, Salcedo, Macalalad, Alba and Fernando have been recaptured by the police during follow-up operations, according to Paglinawan. Pantig, who had fled to Nueva Ecija right after escaping, surrendered in the afternoon.

The station commander said the location of the jail and the station desk made it hard for guards to monitor the inmates' moves. Bulaong said he already ordered the disarming of Tan and Dela Cruz and would initiate an investigation for possible negligence of the two officers.

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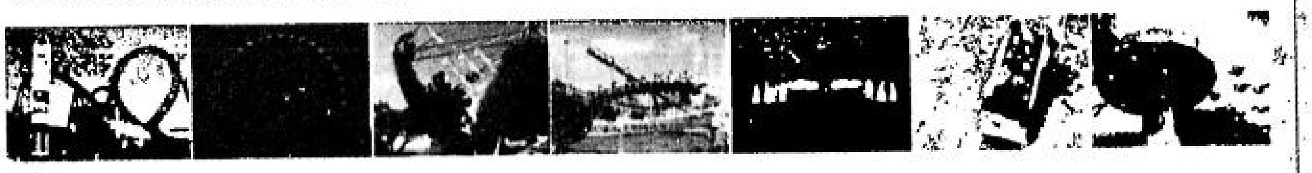

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Whose antidrugs operation was legit?

By Luige A. del Puerto

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO yesterday said it was up to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency to determine whether or not the four anti-narcotics officers of the Manila Police District (MPD) were really conducting a legitimate antidrug operation when they were arrested on Thursday.

P01 Erwin Castro, P02 Jonathan Ruiz, P03 Mike Fabian Ongpauco and P02 Dranreb Cipriano—members of the MPD's anti-illegal drugs unit—were nabbed during a buy-bust operation in the parking area of a fast food restaurant on Jose Abad Santos in Tondo.

Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the Anti-Illegal Drugs Operations Task Force who arrested the four said a search of their car yielded at least a kilo of suspected methampetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

But in a statement, Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, MPD director, defended his men. "They were wrongfully labeled as suspects," he said.

He added that the four, contrary to the CIDG agents' claims, were conducting a legitimate buy-bust operation "complete with a pre-operation report and coordination sheet with the PDEA."

CIDG director Jesus Versoza, however, said there were some irregularities in the actions of the four MPD policemen.

He said that such an operation would require the presence of an official but the four officers were low-ranking policemen. None of them was an official, meaning a cop with the rank of inspector.

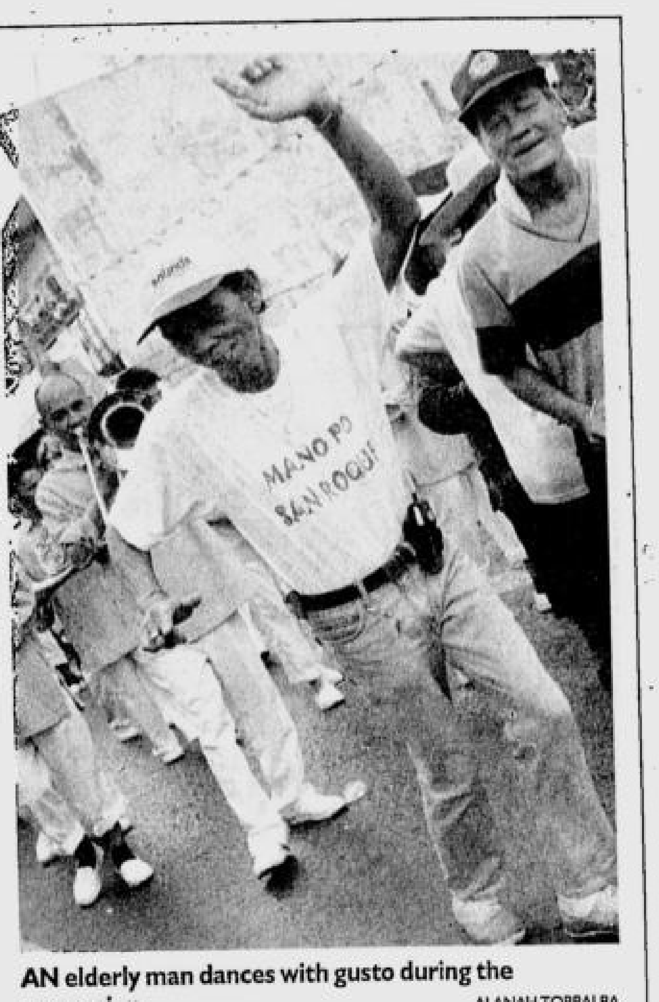
Versoza listed a few requirements for an anti-narcotics operation to be legitimate:

- There must be a deputation or authorization from PDEA, or the agency's men should be present during the operation.
- There must be an operation clearance.
- The operation must be coordinated with territorial units.
- If drugs are sold as bait, there must be "controlled delivery," meaning officers should monitor the movement of the drugs at all times.

The four officers had shown a pre-operation report, but had no papers on them at the time of their arrest, Versoza said. *With Margaux C. Ortiz*

The rains came, but so did answered prayers

By Nancy C. Carvajal



AN elderly man dances with gusto during the procession. ALANAH TORRALBA

DESPITE THE INTERMITTENT RAINS, DEVOTEES and merrymakers danced in the streets during a procession to celebrate the 243rd Feast Day of Señor San Roque in Valenzuela City yesterday.

While single women asked for divine intervention in finding a husband, others prayed for the recovery of their sick loved ones. Others, however, said they were giving thanks for prayers that had been answered.

"I have been dancing in the fiesta for the past five years and yet I am still unmarried," said Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian who led the dancers.

The 31-year-old Gatchalian is one of the few chief executives in Metro Manila who are still single.

Even the serious-looking director of the Northern Police District, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, joined the other dancers on the streets..

When asked jokingly whether he was praying for a partner, Bataoil, who is already married, said, "I prayed for health and safety for my family and to be good at what I do."

Gatchalian said that the celebration was a way of preserving and promoting a tradition of the city despite the changing times.

"It is always a pleasant respite to go back to tradition," he added.

Among the attendees who braved the rains was the Cebu-based family of Leticia Ramos who had prayed for the recovery of her dying daughter.

"We have have been going to Valenzuela for the past 28 years to pray to Señor San Roque who interceded for my daughterso she could be healed," Ramos said.

Apart from the procession, which served as the highlight of the fiesta, several activities like the inauguration of the city's new emergency hospital, fireworks and a concert were scheduled last night.

A fireworks display and a concert were also on the list of events in the evening.

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   Proposal Type: Land Development

2. **Former GSIS Makati Office**
   Location: Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City
   TCT Nos. S – 19518, S – 19519, S – 19520
   Land Area: 2,429sqm.
   Improvements: 7 storey bldg. w/ roof deck
   Proposal Type: Sale, Long Term Lease

3. **Vernida III (Formerly PAL Building)**
   Location: Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City
   TCT Nos. 207426, 207427
   Land Area: 1,766 sqm.
   Improvement: 9 storey building
   Proposal Type: Sale, Long Term Lease, Joint Venture

4. **GSIS Quezon City Property**
   Location: Eliptical Road, Quezon City
   TCT Nos. N-187226, N-187227
   Land Area: 29, 844 Sqm.
   Proposal Type: Long Term Lease

Interested parties may submit their proposals to the Disposition of Acquired Assets Department, 5th floor, Core C, GSIS Headquarters, Financial Center, Pasay City.

All proposals shall be evaluated by the AAEC and shall be subject to the final approval of the President and General Manager and/or BOARD OF TRUSTEES. GSIS reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals.

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Pasig orders closure of 2 siphon offices

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PASIG CITY GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY closed two offices of a company engaged in siphoning sludge from septic tanks for allegedly dumping waste into a drainage system and operating without business permits.

City Environment and Natural Resources Office chief Raquel Naciongayo told the INQUIRER that they served the closure orders on two offices of the E. Malabanan Belen Excavator and Plumbing Services in Barangay Sta. Lucia.

Naciongayo said they will also file criminal charges against the company on Monday.

"We already canceled the company's business permit in July 2004 after one of their trucks was accosted in Quezon City," she added.

On Tuesday, another of the company's trucks was allegedly caught dumping human waste into a drainage in a residential area in Barangay Bagong Ilog.

The first closure order was served on an office registered under the name of Luzviminda Belen. The order, signed by Business Permits and License Office chief Dianeth Valencia, said the decision to close down the office stemmed from Tuesday's illegal dumping incident.

The second closure order was served on an office registered under the name of Mario Belen. The firm reportedly did not have the necessary business permits apart from not paying taxes it owed the city government. The INQUIRER called up the company's offices but the employees who answered said Luzviminda Belen was not available for an interview. *With Eliza A. Victoria*

METROBRIEFS

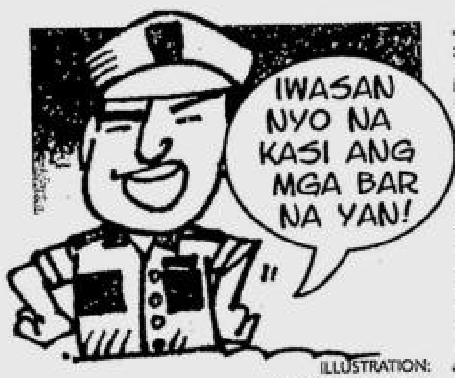
IWASAN NYO NA KASI ANG MGA BAR NA YAN!

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

3 cops nabbed for disco murders

THREE policemen were arrested for allegedly shooting to death two men who were drinking in a videoke bar in Parañaque City before dawn yesterday. Police identified the lawmen as P01 James Sianen, P01 Rolsky Cadir and P01 Kenneth Wanson, all members of the Special Action Force based in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City. Initial investigation disclosed that the policemen were drinking inside Led'z KTV Bar and Restaurant in Barangay Sun Valley at 1:45 a.m. when they started arguing with two other customers identified as Andy Manzano and Wilmar Atobagos. City police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles said Atobagos suddenly stabbed Cadir and Wanson several times in the chest with an ice pick. Although wounded, the policemen ran after Atobagos and shot him in the head and right knee. He died on the spot, the police official said. Sianen allegedly shot Manzano in the head. The Philippine National Police prohibits policemen from going to bars or similar establishments, even when off duty, except when on an official mission. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Man killed in mishap

THE PRIVATE jeep was already crowded but Amoreto Nicasio, 19, was in a hurry yesterday afternoon so he decided to just sit on the roof. The next thing he knew, the jeep was sliding down the narrow concrete road in Rodriguez, Rizal province . Nicasio fell off the jeep and died at the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center. Fifteen other passengers ustained minor injuries, Rodriguez 'olice chief Supt. Manuel Pion told the NQUIRER. Investigator SPO2 Onofre 'avas said the incident happened at :30 p.m. yesterday in Sitio Toyang, Barangay Mascap, a remote mountain arangay in the area. The driver, rnesto Panopio, 53, told the police hat as they were on their way down he mountainous area, he lost control f the vehicle. When he turned the vheel to the left to make the vehicle low down, the jeep fell on its side, and Nicasio was thrown off the roof. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr*

AAP car show

THE AUTOMOBILE Association of the Philippines (AAP) has lined up several activities to celebrate its 75th year, including the first-ever AAP Auto Show. The latest cars, after-market auto parts, accessories, gadgets, tools and equipment will be featured at the show which will run until tomorrow at The Forum, Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City. AAP president Augusto "Gus" Lagman said exciting activities for car buffs and motor sport enthusiasts are also scheduled during the week-long celebration such as an exhibit of vintage cars, a parade of AF3 cars, slalom, rally cross and karting events. For more information, call the AAP 75th Diamond Jubilee celebration secretariat at 7230808, 7051900, 8325401 or 8325422.

'Ani' at QC Circle

GINTONG Ani Philippines, a group of artists based at the Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation of the Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, will present a cultural show at 6 p.m. on Sunday at the Quezon Memorial Circle Liwasang Aurora. CLSU president Dr. Rodolfo Undan said the cultural show—dubbed as "Sayaw Filipino, Handog Sentenaryo"—is part of the pre-celebration of the state university's centennial founding anniversary next year. QC Parks Development Foundation president Charito Planas and other officials invite everyone to watch the free show.

Saudi trip no mean feat

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA is known for exaggerating tales and promises, but he was not exaggerating when he said that President Macapagal-Arroyo's trip to Saudi Arabia was a "major coup."

Extracting a pledge from the Saudi king and crown prince that the oil-rich kingdom would invest heavily in the country was no mean feat.

Mindanao would greatly benefit from the Saudi investments since the region is being eyed as the site of a $1-billion oil refinery.

A $300-million petrochemical .plant in Bataan by Saudi Aramco is in the works.

That's the economic side.

But to ordinary folks, what counts more is the grant of freedom to 170 overseas Filipino workers who were detained in Saudi jails for various offenses.

The OFWs were set free by the Saudi king on the occasion of the President's visit to the kingdom.

No leader before GMA has done that feat. And to the poor, who make up the majority of our overseas workers, that meant a lot.

For that feat alone, GMA's trip to Saudi Arabia paid huge dividends for her in terms of winning the poor to her side.

* * *

Sen. Panfilo Lacson had better think twice next time before looking for people to cross swords with.

The loquacious senator found a match in Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez .

Lacson had said Gonzalez was having kidney problems and was undergoing dialysis.

So what, countered Gonzalez, ,my sickness is a non-issue.

Gonzalez retorted that Lacson should explain his role in an alleged coup plot revealed by former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Leandro Aragoncillo.

Aragoncillo pleaded guilty to stealing top-secret documents in FBI and White House files.

The papers were allegedly and passed on to Lacson and former President Estrada.

The US government may soon ask for Lacson's extradition to face espionage charges in America.

So, who has the bigger problem—Gonzalez, with his defective kidneys that are being treated, or Lacson, who is sure to be indicted in the US for conspiring with a man who has pleaded guilty to the charge of espionage?

Manila Water

Water interruption in portion of Pasig City and Quezon City needed to upgrade pipelines

Manila Water is currently undertaking an aggressive capital expenditure program to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. In line with this, the company will undertake an interconnection of pipelines along J Vargas and San Miguel Avenue which will result in a temporary cutoff of water supply. The interruption will begin 10:00 p.m., Saturday, May 13, 2006, up to 6:00 a.m., Sunday, May 14. The following Pasig areas will be affected: Ortigas Center; Ortigas Avenue; San Antonio Village; Barangays: Kapitolyo, Pineda, Oranbo and Bagong Ilog; Sheridan, United St. and Valle Verde IV.

Meanwhile Valle Verde VI in Quezon City will also experience temporary water interruption.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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(PDI – May 13, 2006)

UK lacked resources to stop London bombings

LONDON—TWO OF THE SUICIDE bombers behind last year's deadly attacks on London probably had contacts with al-Qaida—but British security lacked resources to stop the atrocity, two reports said on Thursday.

The first detailed accounts of the July 7 bombings cleared the intelligence services of any failings in not preventing Britain's worst-ever terrorist strike.

At the same time the reports—one by an influential parliamentary committee and another by the Home Office—highlighted the magnitude of the task they face in foiling such plots.

Four British Muslim extremists killed 52 innocent people and injured more than 700 others when they blew up three London Underground trains and a double-decker bus during the morning rush hour by detonating bombs packed into rucksacks.

Two of the men, Mohammad Sidique Khan, 30, and Shehzad Tanweer, 22, had appeared only vaguely on Britain's intelligence radar beforehand, but were considered peripheral figures and not pursued.

After the bombings, it emerged both Khan and Tanweer had been to Pakistan: Khan alone in 2003 and again with Tanweer between November 2004 and February 2005.

"It has not yet been established who they met in Pakistan but it is assessed as likely that they had some contact with al-Qaida figures," the Intelligence and Security Committee report said, comments echoed in the Home Office document.

The two men, whose identities were established only after July 7, probably received "operational training" there, it said.

Security officials in Pakistan said Thursday that British and Pakistani investigators were focusing on almost 200 phone calls made from Pakistan to one of the London bombers in a bid to uncover any links to al-Qaida.

British Home Secretary John Reid said there was no "irrefutable evidence" that the terrorist group played a part in July 7 but "considerable circumstantial evidence" because of Khan and Tanweer's trips to Pakistan.

Although the parliamentary committee's chair, Paul Murphy, insisted there was no "culpable failure" on the part of the intelligence services, British newspapers Friday were more critical.

The Sun headlined its double-page spread on the reports "Poor intelligence" while both The Guardian and The Times highlighted that domestic spy agency MI5 did not think "home-grown" suicide bombings were likely in Britain.

The Guardian said in its leader column it was "hard not to conclude that the security failure was both negligent and inexcusable."

"Beneath the reasonable language in Paul Murphy's report lies a searing indictment of confusion, poor judgment, missed opportunities and plain ignorance that prevented Britain's security services from carrying out the basic task assigned to them: protecting the nation from its enemies," The Times said.

The parliamentary committee's report also revealed a third bomber, Germaine Lindsay, 19, was unwittingly known to the security services. There was no prior information on the fourth and youngest attacker, 18-year-old Hasib Hussain. *AFP*

50 rebs killed, 17 sailors lost in Sri Lanka violence

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA—A SEA battle launched by Tamil Tiger rebels in northern Sri Lanka left about 50 insurgents and 17 sailors dead or missing in a sharp escalation of violence that moved the country back to the brink of civil war Friday.

Both the government and a team of European-led monitors accused the Tigers of violating the country's 2002 ceasefire accord with their attack that sank a navy patrol boat off the northern coast on Thursday.

Government troops retaliated, downing five rebel boats, damaging three others and launching airstrikes on guerrilla-held territory, putting the severest strain yet on the 2002 accord between the Tigers and government that halted two decades of warfare.

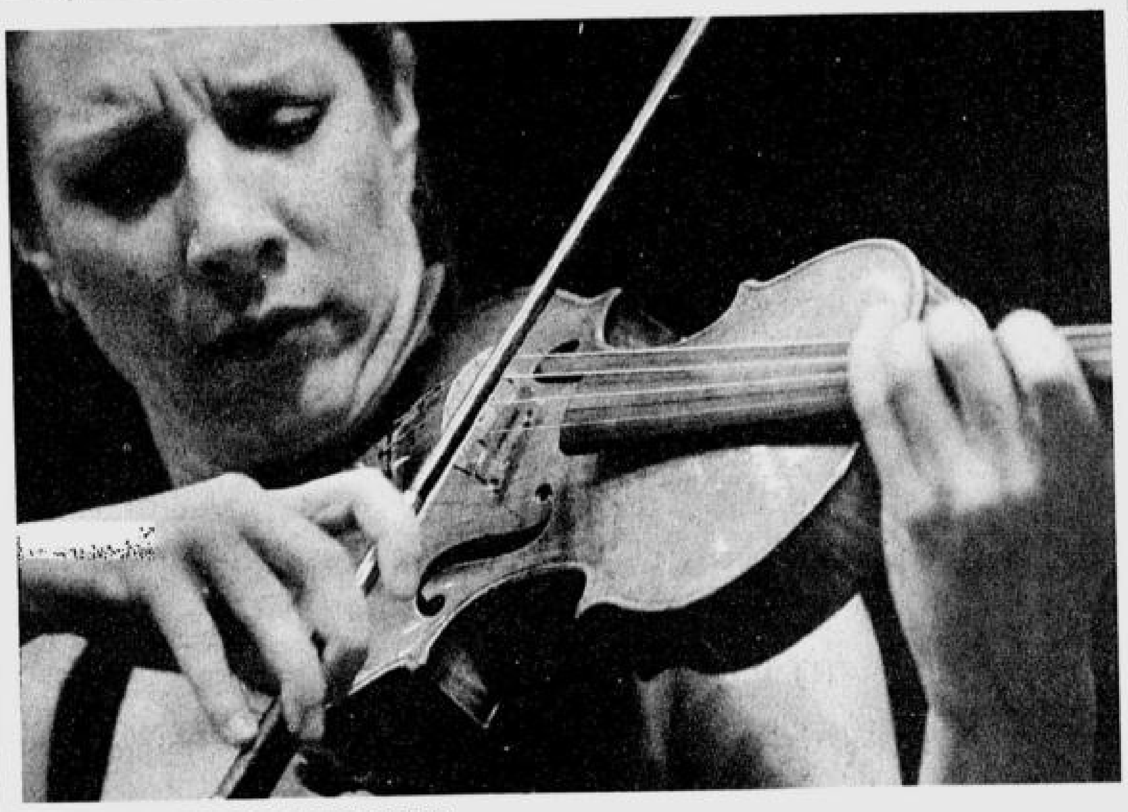
"This is a very serious attack (by the Tigers), a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement," government spokesperson Keheliya Rambukwella told The Associated Press.

The incident prompted the police to tighten security in the capital Colombo, where tens of thousands of Buddhists prepared to celebrate the birth of the Buddha, the faith's founder. Soldiers with drawn guns were seen posted at some intersections where colorful artwork depicted the life and teaching of Buddha.

The Tigers, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, launched their attack in 15 small boats against a navy convoy escorting a troop carrier with 710 soldiers aboard joining back to duties, navy spokesperson Commander D.K.P. Dassanayake said.

"Navy fast-attack boats escorting the vessel engaged the Tiger boats and one of them was destroyed by a suicide boat," he said.

There were 15 sailors and two officers on board the downed navy boat, and the Sri Lankan military website said the men were lost, meaning they were dead or missing. *AP*



WANNA BUY A STRADIVARI?
The Stradivari violin known as "The Hammer" is played by violin virtuoso Elizabeth Pitcairn at Christie's auctioneers in New York May 11. The violin, expected to fetch between $1.5 and $2.5 million, will be part of an auction of musical instruments at Christie's in New York on May 16. REUTERS

Juror saved Moussaoui, says report

WASHINGTON—ZACARIAS Moussaoui was saved from a death sentence by a single juror who never explained his vote to other members of the jury that sent the Sept. 11 conspirator to prison for life, The Washington Post reported on Friday.

The foreman of the 12-person federal jury told the newspaper that the panel voted 11-1, 10-2 and 10-2 in favor of the death penalty on the three charges for which Moussaoui was eligible for execution.

A unanimous vote on any one of the three terrorism charges was required to return a death sentence.

Moussaoui, 37, a French citizen of Moroccan descent, was sentenced on May 4 to spend the rest of his life in prison for his part in the hijacking plot that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The foreman said she voted for the death penalty because the government proved its case, the Post reported. *Reuters*

26 years later, priest convicted of nun's slaying

TOLEDO, OHIO—EVEN AFTER POLICE SUSpected a priest of killing a nun 26 years ago, they had no one who could place him at the hospital chapel where the body was found.

The Rev. Gerald Robinson had twice told investigators—in 1980 and just two years ago—that he was in his room that morning and just finished showering.

But after his arrest in 2004 made national headlines, three people came forward saying they could put Robinson at the murder scene.

ROBINSON REUTERS

Robinson was convicted Thursday of murdering Sister Margaret Ann Pahl a day before Easter in 1980. He was immediately sentenced to the mandatory term of 15 years to life in prison and led away in handcuffs to the county jail.

Robinson, 68, did not visibly react to the verdict. His friends and family gasped when it was read. The priest's lawyers promised to appeal.

As the hospital chaplain, Robinson had worked closely with Sister Pahl, the chapel caretaker, and presided at her funeral Mass.

Sister Pahl, 71, was killed while she was preparing the chapel for Easter services at Mercy Hospital on April 5, 1980. She was choked, then stabbed 31 times.

Grace Jones, who worked in a hospital laboratory, said she was waiting for an elevator when she saw Robinson come out the chapel doors carrying a duffel bag. Another worker said she saw Robinson by the chapel an hour before a nun discovered Sister Pahl's body.

The priest's attorneys pointed out that witnesses gave conflicting accounts of where and when they saw Robinson near the chapel. Despite the inconsistencies, however, the testimony put the priest near the chapel at a time he claimed to have been in his hospital apartment.

Police focused their attention on Robinson within two weeks of the slaying. They found a sword-shaped letter opener in his desk, and he admitted making up a story he told police that someone else confessed to him about committing the murder.

Robinson wasn't charged, however, and remained a priest in a city where about one-fourth of the 300,000 residents are Catholic.

The case went cold for two decades. The letter opener and a bloodstained altar cloth remained locked away in a police storage room until a letter surfaced in December 2003 accusing Robinson and other priests of molesting a woman. Police weren't able to substantiate the allegations of sexual abuse, but it led them back to the nun's murder.

Investigators soon noticed that bloodstains on the altar cloth seemed to match the patterns of the letter opener. New technology not available in 1980 allowed a comparison between the stains and the letter opener, which had a diamond-shaped cross-section and a dime-sized medallion with an image of the US Capitol.

Forensic experts said the blade was used to inflict the wounds, and that the medallion appeared to be the source of a faint stain on the altar cloth. They also matched up holes in the nun's clothes with the blade. *AP*

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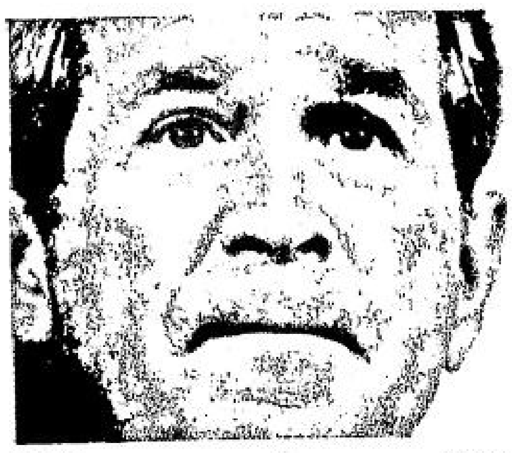
Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Millions of Americans' calls tracked by Bush



BUSH REUTERS

WASHINGTON—LAWMAKERS VOWED THURSDAY TO investigate revelations that a US spy agency was tracking the phone records of tens of millions of Americans as President George W. Bush insisted that privacy rights were not under threat.

Members of Bush's Republican party and opposition Democrats expressed alarm at the newspaper report that the National Security Agency (NSA) was building an unprecedented database of phone records with the help of three major telephone companies.

Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, vowed to hold hearings and demand testimony from telephone company executives to determine if constitutional freedoms had been violated.

"The danger is privacy is being invaded. It's a program of big, big brother," Specter told CBS television.

Coming on the heels of recent revelations that Bush had allowed eavesdropping on telephone calls to foreign destinations without court warrants, Bush sought to head off possible political damage with a hastily arranged appearance before reporters.

Bush did not deny or confirm the existence of the world's largest database, which USA Today said was set up after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

But he asserted that the US intelligence community is not "mining or trolling" through the private lives of Americans, simply attempting "to intercept the communications of people with known links to al-Qaida and related terrorist organizations."

"After Sept. 11, I vowed to the American people that our government would do everything within the law to protect them against another terrorist attack," Bush said at the White House.

"If al-Qaida or their associates are making calls into the United States or out of the United States, we want to know what they're saying," he said.

Bush sought to reassure the public that "the privacy of ordinary Americans is fiercely protected," under the antiterrorism programs.

Opposition Democrats seized on the report as further proof that the Bush administration was flouting civil liberties under a veil of secrecy. *AFP*

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US Senate breaks stalemate over immigration bill

WASHINGTON—SENATE LEADERS SAID Thursday that they had broken a political stalemate and would bring to the floor next week an immigration bill that could put millions of illegal immigrants on the road to eventual US citizenship.

An agreement reached Thursday by Senators Bill Frist, R-Tenn., the Republican majority leader, and Harry Reid, D-Nev., the Democratic minority leader, ends an impasse that has stalled action in the Senate for weeks while immigrants and their advocates have staged huge demonstrations across the country.

The deal does not mean that a bill will emerge from Congress soon. But it is significant that the Senate leaders agreed to proceed, because the chamber operates under peculiar rules and traditions that can bury legislation indefinitely. Frist and Reid said they hoped to schedule a vote before Memorial Day.

Even if the Senate passes an immigration bill, it would have to be reconciled with a bill passed in December by the House.

Until partisan bickering sidetracked legislation in the Senate in early April, the chamber was working on a package that offered opportunities for eventual citizenship, a guestworker program for some immigrants and measures to enhance border security.

The tougher House bill focuses on border security and would crack down on illegal immigrants and those who employ them. Given the deep differences between Senate and House, negotiations could be long and heated.

"What the Democratic leader and I have laid out is a way to get on to this bill," Frist said, "and as you can tell, both of us are working in very good faith on the various issues that have been raised on the floor."

Reid said he welcomed the return of the immigration bill to the Senate floor. "America's immigration system is broken, and our national security depends on Republicans and Democrats finding common ground to fix it," he said. "The assurances I have received from Senator Frist make me hopeful we can finally move forward on real comprehensive reform." *NYT*

Disgraced stem cell scientist indicted for fraud

HWANG with Snuppy, the first male dog cloned from adult cells. REUTERS

SEOUL—SOUTH KOrea's disgraced cloning expert Hwang Woo-suk was indicted Friday for fraud and embezzlement related to his faked stem cell research, a senior prosecutor said.

Five other scientists were also indicted on various charges in connection with Hwang's research and the disappearance of millions of dollars in donations, prosecutor Lee In-kyu told a press conference.

"Dr. Hwang was indicted on charges of fraud and embezzlement and breach of bioethics. And five others were also indicted" on various charges, said Lee, reading the conclusions of a five-month probe by prosecutors into Hwang's case.

Hwang, 52, claimed last year that he had created 11 patient-specific stem cells through cloning.

But a panel of experts at Seoul National University, where Hwang worked as a professor, concluded in January that the stem-cell claims were bogus.

The panel also concluded that a 2004 paper by Hwang, in which he claimed to have produced a stem cell from a cloned human embryo, was fabricated.

Prosecutors said their probe confirmed that Hwang's claims regarding stem cells were fraudulent.

"Hwang asked his team to fabricate various data, including photos, the number of stem cells created and DNA test results, featured in the 2004 and 2005 papers published in the US journal Science," Lee said in a televised news conference. *AFP*

■ Obosa sprints to Stage I victory /A25
■ Express stun Phone Pals /A24

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'Caloy' blows Palaro off course

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NAGA CITY—TROPICAL STORM "Caloy" and its fury took center stage in the penultimate day of the Palarong Pambansa here yesterday.

While the city suffered a day-long power outage, at least 10 athletes and an official of the Philippine Sports Commission were hurt as winds and heavy rains buffetted the already delayed Games. Four regional delegations were evacuated from their billeting areas due to impending floods.

All finals in swimming and athletics set for yesterday afternoon were cancelled. Instead, the medalists were decided based on the entries' best times in the heats.

Pole vault events were scrapped as the Metro Naga Sports Complex took the brunt of the storm, forcing athletes and officials to seek shelter at the venue's dark, dingy dugouts.

The absence of power generators forced Games officials to process the results manually.

Palaro national coordinator Len Toledo said the delegations from Northern Mindanao, Calabarzon, Mimaropa and the Cotabato Region were evacuated from their respective billeting campuses which were at risk of getting flooded.

Ball games like basketball, volleyball, football, softball and baseball were rescheduled and would be played today, the Games' last day.

Despite the typhoon, the National Capital Region continued to lord it over in the elementary and secondary competitions based on the team score systems of the Department of Education.

NCR, the secondary defending champion, has already tallied 102 team points, with the bulk of its victories scored in gymnastics, archery, swimming and athletics.

Calabarzon, striking hardest in track and field, amassed 88 points, followed by Western Visayas with 66, Mimaropa (35), and Central Luzon (27).

The Big City bets also dominated the elementary division with 97 points, 45 ahead of second-running Western Visayas (52). Defending champion Calabarzon came next with 34.5 followed by Central Luzon (29.5) and Mimaropa (25).

With its high school basketball and baseball teams unbeaten, NCR is also expected to gain in team sports which dangle between 25 and 30 points. Powered by University of Santo Tomas

'CALOY'/ A24

NCR parents claim EV, C'barzon bets overaged

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NAGA CITY—THOU SHALT NOT cheat.

Parents of the National Capital Region elementary baseball team yesterday filed a formal protest against the elementary baseball teams of Calabarzon (Region IV-A) and Eastern Visayas, which they claimed have players over the age limit of 13 years.

In a letter addressed to Department of Education Officer-in-Charge Fe Hidalgo yesterday, the parents specifically cited as overaged Calabarzon pitcher Rannel Osmilo and two unnamed players from Eastern Visayas manning first base and center field.

The complaint used as basis the May 11, 2006 episode of TV Patrol (early evening edition) on ABS-CBN and the show of Ces Drilon on ANC, which mentioned that Osmillo was born in 1987.

As to the two East Visayans, the

NCR/ A24

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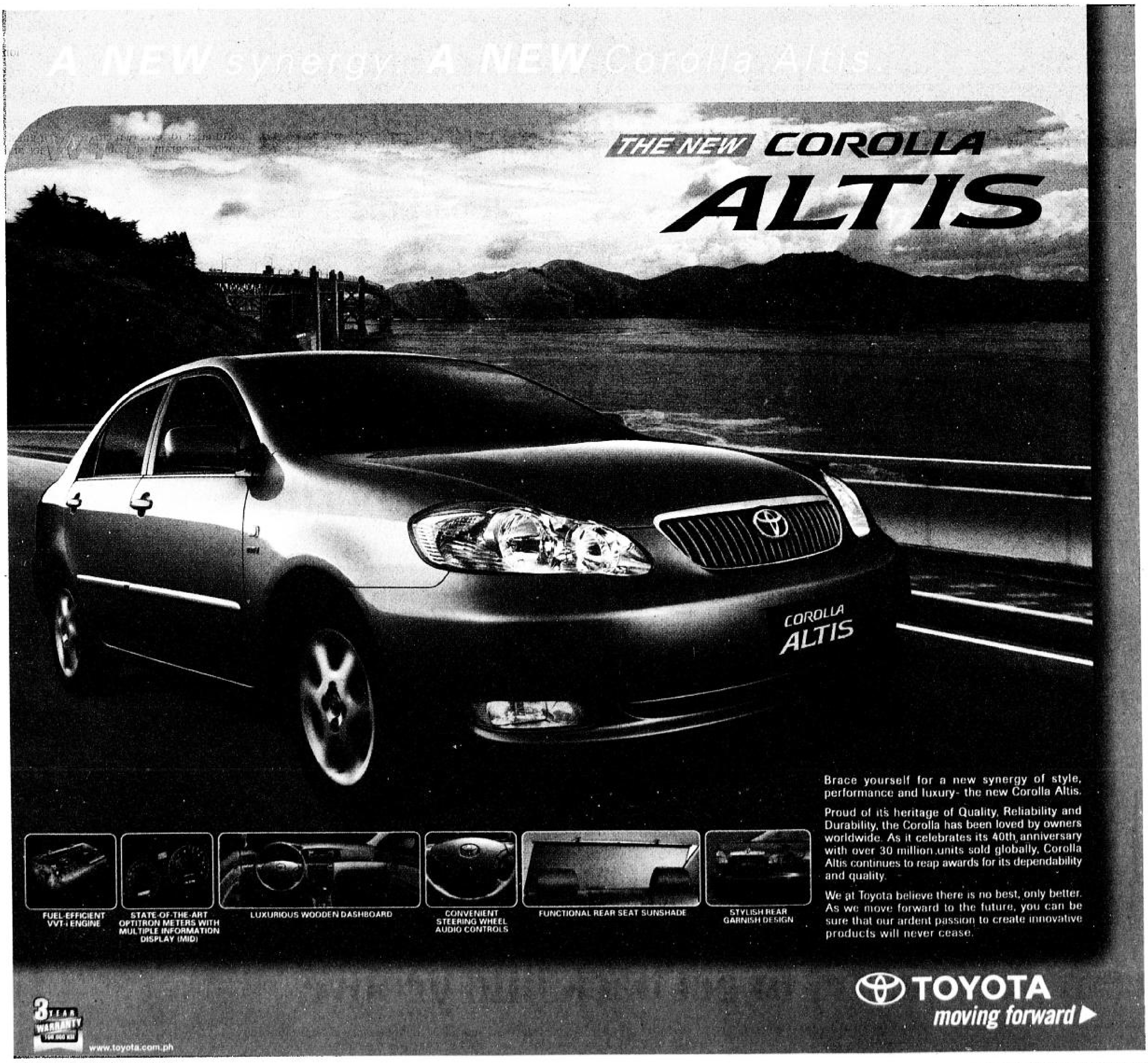

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Air21 pulls off big upset

By Francis Ochoa

WHEN AIR21 DEALT AWAY RENREN RITUALO, THE TEAM MANAGEMENT made it clear that the Express were going to rally behind a new franchise face in KG Cañaleta.

Last night, the slam dunk artist embraced that role to the hilt.

Cañaleta led an Express crew that transformed itself into an efficient error-forcing machine that went on to pound the beefed-up Alaska Aces, 99-88, in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum last night.

"We just have to move forward," said Air21 coach Bo Perasol as the Express continued its post-Ritualo era after a blockbuster trade that shipped the former La Salle gunner to Talk 'N Text.

And standing at the forefront of that forward push was Cañaleta, the reigning dunk champion who finished with a game-high 27 points built around 10-of-16 shooting from the field.

Cañaleta helped the grossly undermanned Express build early double-digit leads, but when the Aces made a run that threatened to turn the game around, Air21's defense bared its teeth, forcing three huge steals and even bigger defensive stops down the stretch to ice the victory, the team's fifth in 14 outings.

Alaska, its fluid offense thrown into disarray by an Air21 defense that forced 30 turnovers and collected 40 points off them, dropped its seventh game in six outings despite welcoming a pair of big acquisitions.

The Aces showed up with former MVP Willie Miller and John Ferriols, acquired in a trade with the Phone Pals for Don Allado.

Ironically, the Express went the opposite way manpower-wise. Not only did they lose Ritualo in exchange for a token warm body in seldom-used Leo Avenido, Air21 was also without swingman Gary David and spunky guard Ronald Tubid, who were both injured.

In the second game, Mark Macapagal starred as Barangay Ginebra, another handicapped team, shocked a retooled Talk 'N text squad, 124-121.

The Kings climbed to 6-6 despite missing Erik Menk, Andy Seigle, Romel Adducul and Rodney Santos, all out due to various injuries.

The Phone Pals, on the other hand, dropped to 5-8 despite showing up with a vaunted roster that included new acquisitions Ritualo and Allado.

The scores:

First Game

AIR21 99—Cañaleta 27, R. De Ocampo 21, Y. De Ocampo 21, Arboleda 13, Avenido 9, Telan 8, Dacia 0, Padilla 0, Bernardo 0, Se 0.

ALASKA 88—Cortez 16, Thoss 15, Carlaso 14, Belasco 14, Ferriols 8, Miller 8, Dela Cruz 7, Hugnatan 6, Wilson 0.

Quarters: 26-28, 54-48, 73-70, 99-88.

SEA fencing starts today

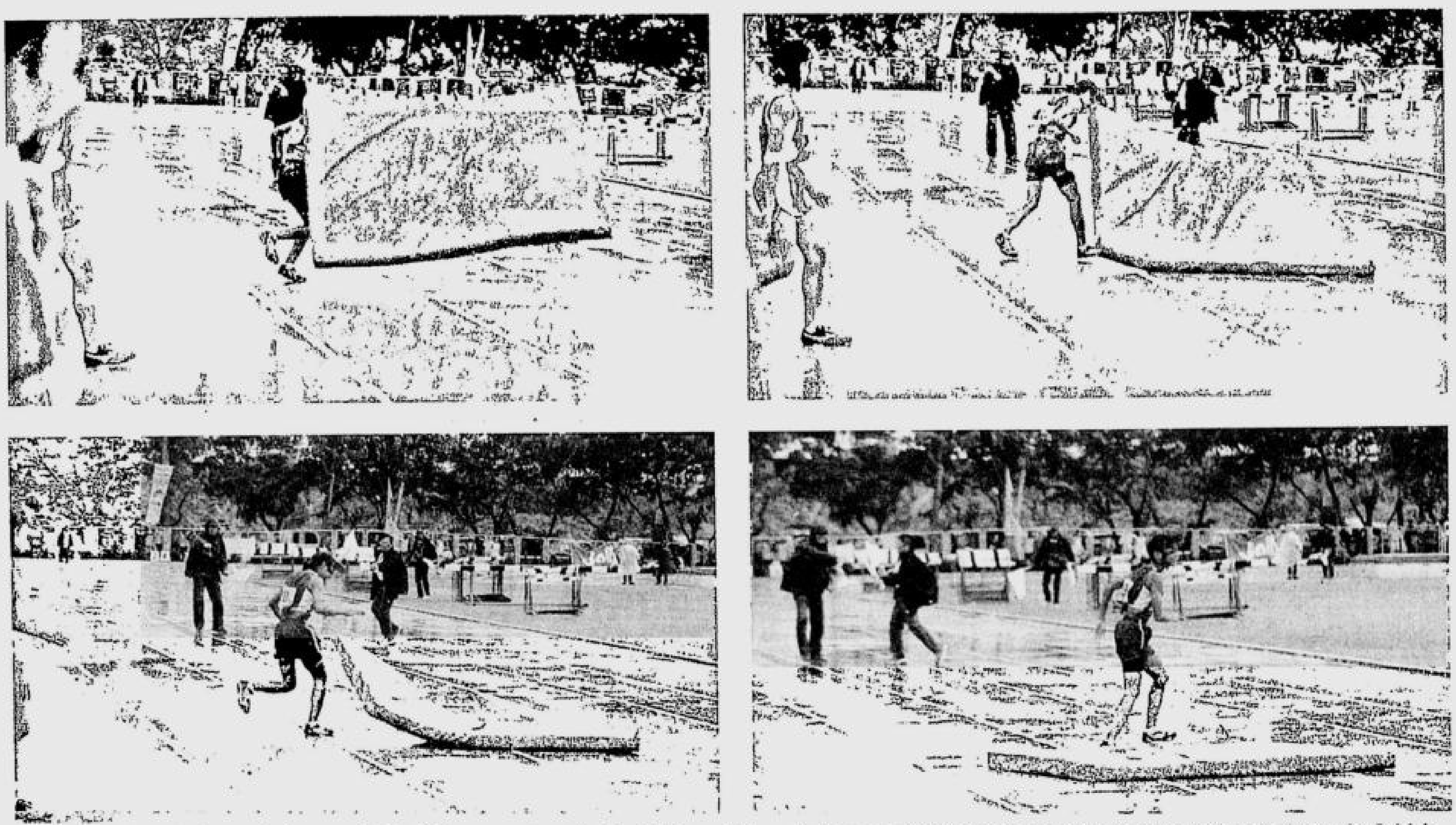
FENCERS FROM SEVEN COUNTRIES, INcluding host Philippines, will vie for honors in the 2006 Southeast Asian fencing championships which reels off today at the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City.

These fencers come from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Action kicks off at 9 a.m. with national cadet foil champions Maximus Baluyot and Abu Ignacio leading the charge for the Filipinos.

The opening rites scheduled this afternoon has been reset at 4 p.m. on Monday. Pasig City Vice Mayor Yoyong Martirez, a former national basketball player, has been invited as guest of honor in place of Mayor Vicente Eusebio.

The other guests are Philippine Sports Commission chair William Ramirez and Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr.



HIGH winds brought by tropical storm "Caloy" blows a mat used in the high jump flying onto the path of Mimaropa's Jenny Manansala who is sprinting to the finish in the 4x400-meter relay at the Metro Naga Sports Complex. A stunned Manansala staggered but managed to finish the race. Her quartet landed in fifth place. JESS YUSON

'Caloy' blows Palaro off course

From page A23

players, NCR drubbed Central Visayas, 58-47, yesterday to advance to the basketball finals.

Medical chief Dr. Joframel Paz said at least 10 athletes were treated for hypothermia after competing in the athletics relays in heavy rains. Several athletes waiting for their turns at the oval collapsed and were carried to the medical room on stretchers.

Among the athletes treated were John Bert Ybanes and Carlito Sumindong of Northern Mindanao, Paul Angeles of Central Luzon, Merdilisa Disu, Lyka Mae Tubera and Sharon Ciso of Ilocos Region, Analyn Sarabia and Sophia Ali of ARMM, Rocel Agbayani of NCR and Christine Baroy of Zamboanga Peninsula.

PSC chief executive assistant Jonathan Encabo also suffered bruises on his right shoulder after he was hit by a branch of an *acacia* tree that was blown away by winds at the MNSC. Encabo said the branch hit him while he was walking to the media center. He did not seek medical attention.

Mimaropa's Jenny Manansala, competing in the 4x400m relay, was headed for the finish line when high winds blew a three-inch mat onto her path. The cushion was being used as landing pad in the high jump.

Western Visayas drew first blood in boxing when Jerson Nietes won over Randy Daigon of Cotabato Region in the power weight division at the Plaza Quezon in the heart of the city. Cotabato Region's Aaron Rodriguez edged Wilbert Luberanis of Central Visayas on points to take the mosquito division gold.

In the paperweight division, Victor Saludar Jr. of Davao Region bested Jestony Yuson of Central Visayas on points to capture the title. Eastern Visayas got its first gold in boxing through John Riel Casimiro, who beat Ilocos Region's Chris Obillo for the pinweight crown.

Western Visayas copped two golds in the relay events, secondary girls 4X400m and elementary girls 4X400. Calabarzon reigned in the elementary boys 4X400m, while Cordillera Region topped the secondary boys 4X400.

NCR parents . . .

From page A23

complaint specified: "The hair on their faces are shaven and their muscle development is clearly not that of an elementary student."

Reacting to the complaint, Hidalgo yesterday ordered a thorough investigation of the matter and warned that DepEd would slap lifetime bans on coaches and officials found to have been involved in the alleged age cheating.

Hidalgo also instructed Palarong Pambansa national coordinator Len Toledo to look into the charges.

The parents urged the DepEd to verify and countercheck the eligibility of the Calabarzon and Eastern Visayas players. Calabarzon officials, however, said they have documents to prove that Osmillo is qualified to play.

With a report from Alcuin Papa

Tale of two Everest climbs

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

FAULTY EQUIPMENT, severe loneliness and depression, these were purportedly the factors that had prompted mountaineer Dale Abenojar to abandon his quest to reach the summit of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

Somehow I had this premonition when I was told by Jake Aspiras of ABS-CBN, one of Dale's staunchest supporters, that he was feeling homesick and was calling home frequently while at Base Camp 1.

"He misses his wife and kids. He's trying to boost his morale and draw strength and inspiration by talking with them as often as he could," Jake said.

That was some weeks ago. The last update I got from Jake was that Dale was moving up fast and was, in her estimation, ahead of Romi Garduce, the other climber who had set out on this perilous mission way ahead of Abenojar.

I was surprised therefore, to hear that Abenojar had packed up and called it a day, his exact reason or reasons for doing this still unknown. I had been trying to touch base with Jake all day yesterday but she would not answer.

***

On the other hand Garduce, who was taking the slow but sure route, stayed on track.

In the luncheon press conference hosted by GMA-7 last Wednesday, Garduce explained the manner in which he was tackling the mountain.

It was an up/down procedure. From the base camp, he would climb several thousand feet up, then go down to base camp again to recharge. With every ascent, he added several thousand feet.

This process, he said, is called acclimatization.

***

Garduce had just descended from a 20,000-foot climb when the press interviewed him via satellite from the base camp where he was resting with the GMA-7 television crew headed by Jiggy Manicad.

Romi said he had just made his last descent. He was preparing for his final assault to the summit where there was no turning back. They call this area "Death Zone," which is self-explanatory. This is the place where the greatest dangers lurk.

"God willing, it will take two to three weeks to complete the climb. We are praying for good weather and good health."

So far, the forces of nature have cooperated with Romi and his team. And he has managed to stay healthy, unlike some of the other climbers who have experienced frost bite, brain and lung edema and disorientation.

"*'Yun ngang isang kasabay namin*, he climbed for eight hours and remembered nothing of what transpired," Romi related. One mountaineer also fell off 2,000 feet and eventually died.

Romi has never experienced the major "illnesses" brought about by extremely high altitude and thin air. Credit this to knowledge and preparedness.

When he makes his final assault, Romi will carry bags of oxygen with him, to ensure that his lungs and brain stay healthy.

Romi had his training with the UP mountaineers. He sounds like a very intelligent man. Based on the condition he was in when we talked to him, it looks like he's a man on the way to the top. That's being literal.

Meanwhile, GMA-7 corporate communications head Butch Raquel made it known that they would also be documenting the ascent of the third group that arrived in Katmandu recently, if they are willing.

"It doesn't matter who gets there first. What is important is that a Filipino has reached the peak of Mount Everest."

SPORTSWATCH

'Salpukan' finals today

THE "SUMMER SALPUKAN" 6-COCK DERBY enters its championship round at the Makati Coliseum today with 20 participants seeing action. Seeing action today in the B-Meg Derby Ace-sponsored derby, which stakes P4.4 million, are participants who posted 3.0 and 2.5 points in the elimination rounds. Among the frontrunners are Efren Canlas (Mayo Kinse Makati Coliseum), Sam Mendoza (Sam High Fashion), Francis Rodriguez (San Rafael LNF Farms), Alex Calderon (ME Tama Ka), Dexter Sacosan (Hard Cuts), Lito Joseph (Maverick), Wilmer Ting of Davao City (Davao Gold), Louie Cua (LCC), Tranca Bay and Pogi Solo Champion entries. For more inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

Las Piñas derby kicks off

COCKERS FROM CAVITE, LAGUNA, LAS PIÑAS, Muntinlupa, Pasay and Parañaque square it off in a special 3-cock derby tonight at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Sixty-two participants will figure in 90 fights starting at 6 p.m., said coliseum manager and derby host Alex Tobias. At stake is a cash prize of P300,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. For inquiries on submission of weights, call 873-1040 or 874-3910. Regular hackfights are also staged at the Las Piñas Coliseum from Monday to Sunday. Each winner (first 20 fights) gets a P1,000 cash bonus.

Sparks gun for Final 4 berth

IN THE EARLY GAMES OF THE PBL UNITY Cup, Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas kept mouthing a familiar cliché.

"There's no way to go but up," he said, taking care to preface his statement with the explanation that "in the last two conferences we were in the cellar."

Nobody, not even Alas, could have guessed that this is what "up" meant.

Holding a league-best 9-3 record, the Sparks will vie for a Final Four seat versus the Montaña Jewels at 4 p.m. today at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

It's a big turnaround for the team that posted only three wins in the previous conference, but Alas continues to expect more from the Sparks.

Only the top two performers at the end of the eliminations will gain outright semifinal spots.

The Jewels and the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters, who will tackle the TeleTech Titans at 2 p.m., are closely chasing the Sparks.

Montaña fell to second place after a surprising 88-73 loss to Granny Goose last Tuesday, while a two-game slide relegated Rain or Shine to third.

The lower-ranked squads have also been jockeying for position as the two basement teams will be cut at the end of the elimination round.

For TeleTech, the only way to keep its quarterfinal chances alive is to sweep its last two outings versus Rain or Shine and Harbour Centre. At the same time, it must hope that Harbour Centre drops its remaining assignments. *Jasmine W. Payo*

STANDINGS	W	L
Toyota Otis	9	3
Montaña	8	3
R. or Shine	7	4
G. Goose	6	6
Magnolia	5	6
Harbour	5	6
TeleTech	3	9
Hapee-PCU	3	9

GAMES TODAY
(*Olivarez Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Rain or Shine
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Montaña

Spring Oil downs Tagaytay cagers

TAGAYTAY CITY—SPRING COOKING Oil-Parañaque ended a three-game losing skid Thursday night by subduing Batang Tagaytay, 65-58, in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championships at the International Convention Center here.

Mar Reyes of Spring was the only player to finish in double figures with 17 points in the see-saw battle which saw 12 lead chances. But that was enough to give NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Cooking Oil Masters their third win in six games.

NBC executive vice president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Tagaytay squad fell to 4-4 in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Lady Falcons try to get back into groove

Standings—La Salle 5-0; Adamson 3-1; PCU 3-2; FEU 3-2; SSC 2-3; Ateneo 1-3; Lyceum 1-3; UE 0-4.

GAMES TODAY (*Blue Eagle Gym*)
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs Adamson
6 p.m.—Lyceum vs UE

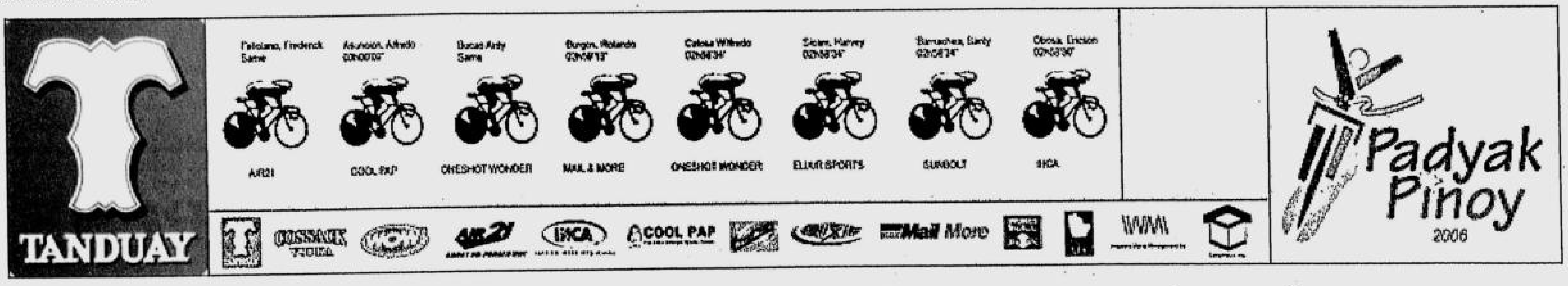
ERSTWHILE UNBEATEN ADAMSON HAS tasted the bitter pill, it now wants a victory in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym in Loyola Heights.

The Lady Falcons, who swept their first three games only to be grounded by the Far Eastern Lady Tams, 25-17, 16-25, 25-19, 25-19, last Sunday, try to get back on track when they tangle with the Ateneo Lady Eagles at 4 p.m.

The Lady Eagles are also smarting from a 25-21, 25-23, 25-21 beating at the hands of the tough Philippine Christian University squad in their last outing.

Although both teams are coming off a six-day rest, Ateneo is more hard-pressed to score a victory. The Lady Eagles, in fact, need to sweep their last three games to at least gain a tie for the fifth and last semifinal berth staked in the elimination phase of this event presented by Shakey's Pizza and organized by Sports Vision.

Lyceum, tied with Ateneo in sixth place, also seeks to keep its flickering semis hopes alive when it battles winless University of the East at 6 p.m. Admission is free.



Obosa sprints to Stage 1 victory

By Musong R. Castillo

CABANATUAN CITY—MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES —or even if it really doesn't shine at all.

Ericson Obosa, finding the wet, rough and muddy but flat grind from Quezon City to this city to his liking, yesterday ruled Stage 1 of the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006.

Obosa worked his way into the fight in the bustling province of Bulacan, weaving through busy streets as part of a 12-man chase group, before outsprinting fellow National team member Santy Barnachea for stage honors.

The 26-year-old native of Manaoag, Pangasinan, clocked two hours, 58 minutes and 30 seconds for the 125-kilometer opening stage, which started under driving rain at the Quezon City Memorial Circle and ended under overcast skies in the heart of this city.

"I am really a sprinter," Obosa, fourth in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games last year, told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "That's why I pushed myself hard, even on mud and rough roads in Bulacan.

"This is a great start, no doubt about it. But there's still a long way to go and there are many other talented riders out there."

Obosa didn't say it, but he was obviously referring to defending champion and history-seeking Warren Davadilla and Arnel Quirimit, another former winner, who met contrasting fates in the kickoff lap.

Davadilla, also the 1998 champion, took it easy and checked in a minute and 38 seconds behind, while Quirimit was part of the main wave of riders that arrived 13 minutes and 41 seconds off the lap winner. Quirimit suffered two busted tires at the time Obosa was making a breakaway.

Barnachea, who mounted an early breakaway together with Edgar Bellecer, less than 10 kilometers into the stage, was just three seconds behind Obosa, while Harvey Sicam, nephew of the great Jacinto Sicam, settled for third place, another four seconds back.

The 30-year-old Davadilla—seeking to become the first man ever to win the summer classic three times and the fifth rider to win this event back-to-back after Joe Sumalde, Jacinto Sicam, Renato Dolosa and Carlo Guieb—just put himself in the mix and really did not push the issue.

He came into this Tour less than 100 percent after suffering from the flu during training three weeks ago.

Obosa led a pursuit pack of 12 riders when the field entered Bulacan, finally catching up with Barnachea and Bellecer near the halfway point of the race in San Rafael town.

He ultimately found himself shoulder to shoulder with the tiring Barnachea, who had set the pace for the most part of the race, with less than 2 km to go before easily outkicking him in the mad sprint to the finish.

ERICSON Obosa, Team Inca skipper, celebrates after taking the initial stage of the Padyak Pinoy from Quezon City to Cabanatuan City. BOY CABRIDO

"I encountered stiffening of my thighs," Barnachea said in Filipino. "I just did not have enough left when Ericson made his move. I just let go with less than 100 meters to go."

Stage 2 takes the riders to San Fernando City in La Union today, a 180-kilometer journey which many see to be the calm before the storm.

The San Fernando-to-Baguio lap will be flagged off tomorrow and the standings are expected to be shaken drastically with the boys separated from the men in the stage featuring two punishing climbs to the summer capital via Marcos and Naguillian roads.

"This race will still be decided in the climbing stages," Obosa said. "There are many such portions in the schedule and whoever wants to win must build a good lead before the Tour enters those stages."

One Shot Wonder leads team battle

CABANATUAN—ONE SHOT Wonder got three cyclists finishing in the Top 20 of the opening stage of the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006 yesterday to vault to the team lead over Air21.

Assistant team skipper Wilfredo Calosa checked in tied for third with Harvey Sicam in the easy 120-kilometer Quezon City to here first stage to lead the team to a total time of 12 hours and 001.001 seconds and a three-minute and 25.080-second lead over Air21.

Cossack Vodka, the youngest team in the field with an average age of only 21, struggled and checked in seventh heading into Stage 2 to San Fernando City.

Team captain Renato Sambrano, also a member of the RP cycling team, arrived in a big wave of riders that checked in 2:34 behind lap winner Ericson Obosa of Inca as Cossack found itself trailing One Shot Wonder by 12 minutes and 12.942 seconds.

STAGE 1 RESULTS

Individual

9. W. Davadilla (Mall & More), same time
10. N. Guanzon (Cool Pap), 3:01:05
11. J. Critativo (One Shot Wonder), same time
12. H. Mangahis (Sunbolt), same time
13. E. Quinones (Go21), same time
14. R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka), same time
15. B. Sepmo (Air21), same time
16. D. Dela Cruz (Air21), same time
17. M. Aleonar (Air21), same time
18. R. Gorantes (Go21), same time
19. R. Navarro (One Shot Wonder), same time
20. M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka), same time

Overall Team Standings

1. One Shot Wonder, 12 hours 01.001 seconds
2. Air21, 12:03:26.082
3. Sunbolt, 12:05:52.362
4. Red Bull, 12:07:02.083
5. Cool Pap, 12:11:48.500
6. Inca, 12:11:49.961
7. Cossack Vodka, 12:12:13.943
8. Mail & More, 12:13:59.650
9. Elixir Sports, 12:19:58.840
10. Go21, 12:19:59.702

S.A. Spurs missing old 'spark'

SAN ANTONIO—DURING THE SAN ANTONIO Spurs' run to the NBA championship last year, Manu Ginobili provided the spark.

In the playoffs, he averaged 20.8 points, shot 50.7 percent from the field, and 43.8 percent from 3-point range.

GINOBILI AP

In this postseason, that spark has been missing—especially in the first two games of the Western Conference semifinals against the Dallas Mavericks.

As the Spurs split the first two games with the Mavs at home, Ginobili averaged 14 points and picked up only one assist while going 9-of-25 from the field and 0-of-5 from 3-point range. Because of nagging injuries all season, Ginobili's high-energy game—which once made TNT analyst Charles Barkley his No. 1 fan—just hasn't been there.

In the first-round series against Sacramento, Ginobili averaged only 15 points.

"He plays so frenetically and so dynamically that it's been tough for him to get into a flow for a very long time, just because of bumps and bruises," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "He's not that strong of a kid. He's not that big. So when he gets an injury, it takes him a while to get back and to play with it."

Ginobili insists he has the same bumps and bruises this time that he had last year. But the Spurs need his production to increase if they hope to repeat as NBA champs. *NYTimes News Service*

- **NBA on TV:**
- **SOLAR SPORTS**—Phoenix vs LA Clippers (10:30 a.m. live, replay at 7 p.m.)
- **ESPN**—Phoenix vs LA Clippers (10:30 a.m. live, replay at 9:30 p.m.)

Cassell has the bark and the bite

EL SEGUNDO—HEADS SHAKE, EYES roll, words fail, smiles never end.

Ask a teammate: Has anyone in the history of our planet ever talked as much as Sam Cassell?

"Nobody, not even toys where you squeeze their stomach and they talk," Elton Brand said. "He just talks away all the time about everything."

His Clippers teammates cannot recall a moment he paused to take breath. Cassell is the only man alive who can break the sound barrier with his mouth.

"He don't shut his mouth," Chris Kaman said. "Whether it's about basketball or life or whatever, he just has this constant blow of information coming out of his mouth."

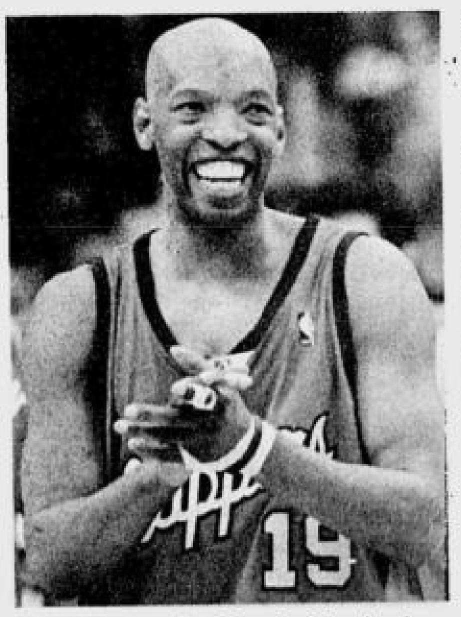
Cassell has something to say. Something he is certain you need to hear.

"This guy talks 24/7," Corey Maggette said.

Fellow starting guard Cuttino Mobley promises you that Cassell does not own a mute button. Suspects that he talks in his sleep. That he cannot stop.

"Nah, never," Mobley said. "Sometimes he just talks to hear himself."

But the Maryland Motormouth has used his effusive style to fuel the Clippers. To give them a touch of swagger. And playing deeper in the playoffs than at anytime in their West Coast history.



ABOUT the only thing the Maryland Motormouth does more than talking is smiling. REUTERS

The Clippers have tied the series, 1-1, with Phoenix in the Western Conference semifinals.

Cassell is 37 years old. He wants to win now. Wants to tell you about it, too. That and a few volumes more.

Clippers coach Mike Dunleavy has been around the NBA for 30 years and strained to think of anyone he ever has seen who talked the way Cassell does.

"I'd have to think about that one," Dunleavy said. "Slick Watts? Maybe. (Larry) Bird talked, but not like that. His was more biting and taunting. Sam's just talking. Half the time he's congratulating guys, talking about whatever."

"Sam has a great personality," Kaman said. "Always smiling, always happy."

Cassell said he mostly talks to teammates and doesn't do much trash talking, though Brand remembers differently when he was an opponent.

"He talked a lot of trash," Brand said. "He'd say, 'This game's over. You guys are too young.'"

To Cassell, "The Sound of Silence" might as well be written on a subway wall. *NYTimes News Service*

Patterson passes away

NEW YORK—FORMER WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT boxing champion Floyd Patterson, who became the youngest boxer to gain the title when he knocked out Archie Moore in 1956 at the age of 21, died on Thursday. He was 71.

Patterson, who had suffered from Alzheimer's disease and prostate cancer, died at his home in New Paltz, New York.

He had three famed clashes with Sweden's Ingemar Johansson in a long career that stretched from his first great professional success against Moore through bouts against Sonny Liston and Muhammad Ali.

"Of all the men I fought, Sonny Liston was the scariest, George Foreman was the most powerful, Floyd Patterson was the most skilled as a boxer," Ali once said.

Elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1991, Patterson was small for a heavyweight and used a peek-a-boo style with his gloves held high in front of his face, using his quickness to defeat heftier opponents.

New York Gov. George Pataki saluted Patterson, who was born in Waco, North Carolina, and raised in the New York City borough of Brooklyn.

"Floyd Patterson was a world champion athlete and an inspiration to many Americans," Pataki said in a statement.

"From his signature style in the ring to his support for amateur athletics later in life, Floyd Patterson was truly the 'gentleman of boxing.'" *Reuters*

PATTERSON AP

Schumacher: Retirement talks can wait

BARCELONA—SEVEN-TIME FORMULA ONE world champion Michael Schumacher says he may wait until the end of the season before deciding whether to retire or keep racing.

"It (the decision) could be very late," the German told reporters in the Ferrari motorhome at the Spanish Grand Prix on Thursday.

"Ferrari is quite happy to wait until the end of the season," he added.

A Ferrari spokesman confirmed that Formula One's glamour team had set no deadline while Schumacher's spokeswoman Sabine Kehm said there was no pressure on him.

"The fact is that Michael is free to decide until the end of the season and he is thankful for this and he has accepted that, not coming over with a decision before the end of the season," she said.

"He said it is a very important decision he has to take and the more time he has to consider it deeply, with all the knowledge he can have, then the better it is."

Schumacher, the most successful driver in the history of Formula One with 86 wins and a long list of records, must decide whether he is ready to hang up his helmet at the age of 37.

McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen has been strongly linked to a move to Ferrari. *Reuters*

- ESPN will air the qualifying race of the Spanish Grand Prix at 7:50 p.m. today (replays tomorrow at 12:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.). The race will be aired tomorrow at 7 p.m.

Iloilo, MPL arrange U-17 title clash

By Cedelf P. Tupas
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN CARLOS CITY—CRISTINA DE LOS Reyes, playing her first 11-a-side tournament, struck her fifth goal in four matches yesterday to set the tone for MPL's 5-1 rout of Negros Oriental in the rain-marred semifinals of the inaugural National Under-17 Football Championships here.

MPL's victory at the slippery SJRI pitch paved the way for a title duel with Iloilo, which pulled off a stunning 4-1 triumph over fancied Davao in the other game.

Latching on a pass from Isabel Kilayko, de los Reyes eluded her defender for a 10-yard roller in the fifth minute, before Negros Oriental drew level in 19th with Danillyn Lasin's 18-yard free kick.

But MPL came out more aggressive after halftime as defender Mica Suarez and Kilayko scored from close range in the 46th and 53rd minutes, respectively.

Substitutes Leah Cruz and Ayi Mondragon wrapped up the victory with goals in the final three minutes as MPL ended Negros Oriental's run in this tournament supported by Petron, Red Ribbon, 2Go and Sports Plus Channel of Solar Sports.

"Endurance was the key to our win. The girls are peaking at the right time," said MPL coach Ernie Nierras, who also drew goals from four different players, including two substitutes.

Positioned at the near post, Karen Mae Deloviar caught the Davao defense napping and gave Iloilo a 1-0 lead in the second minute by flicking the ball to the goal from point blank range following Ma. Stellina Cataluña's corner kick.

Julie Ann Sucob doubled the lead with her 18th minute conversion from the penalty spot, after striker Ana Concepcion was fouled inside the box.

Denso karting championship up

TOP KARTERS SHARE IN THE CELEBRATION of motorsports as they vie for titles at stake in the Denso Karting Invitational Championship today and tomorrow at the Boomland Kart Track on Macapagal Avenue, CCP Complex. The event is part of the culmination festivities in line with the 75th diamond jubilee of the Automobile Association of the Philippines. Participants will dispute the Formula 125 Open, Rotax Max Seniors, ROK Junior, Mini ROK, Formula SL and the AAP Celebrity Cup classes. Among those seeing action are karters from Jet Racing Team, CRG Team, M&M Racing Team and Intelco Racing Team. Race fee is P500 in all classes. Registration is at the Kart Plaza Office or call 817-4895 or 817-2241 local 29.

Australian seeks RP Open repeat

LE VESCONTE

DEFENDING CHAMPION ADAM LE VESconte of Australia hopes to relive his off-the-form-chart victory last year when he leads a solid field in the US$200,000 Philippine Open set May 25-28 at the fabled Wack Wack East course.

The 35-year-old Australian claimed the Philippine Open title by besting Filipino Gerald Rosales with a four-day total of 12-under-par 272 at the Malarayat course in Lipa City.

The victory was a life changing experience for the Queensland-born Le Vesconte who had been winless for the past 10 years.

"The win made me realize that I have not been wasting my time," said Le Vesconte ahead of the 90th RP Open. "After 10 years, I was getting to the point where I was thinking maybe it's time to give it up and go home and do something else.

The valiant Aussie knows the task ahead will be tough, especially with the presence of compatriot Jason Dawes and Thai veteran Boonchu Ruangkit who stayed hot on his heels during the final day last year.

Apart from the array of Asian Tour stalwarts, Le Vesconte will also have to tackle Wack Wack, which he has never played previously. The last time Wack Wack hosted the Open in 2002, Canadian Rick Gibson claimed the title.

"I might ask (Gibson) about his thoughts on the course," said Le Vesconte.

The Philippine Open has welcomed the International Container Terminal Services and Pagcor as part of the family of valued sponsors.

"My love for golf and pride in the future of the sport here made it an easy decision to become involved with the Philippine Open," said the ICTSI supremo Ricky Razon.

Pagcor chair Ephrain Genuino said the company was delighted to be involved with the Open.

At least 39 Filipinos, nine of them amateurs, are vying for the title of Asia's oldest golf Open.

Southwoods, CCC, Northwoods quartets gain Ford nat'l finals

SIXTY PLAYERS IN 15 SURVIVING FOUR-man squads will dispute an all-expense paid golfing holiday to Kunming, China, when the grand finals of the Ford National Team Shootout is played on May 25 at The Orchard and on May 26 at Sta. Elena.

Manila Southwoods, Cebu Country Club and Royal Northwoods emerged as the first grand finalists recently in the three-phase tournament presented by Ford Motors Phils., and sponsored by the Federation of Golf Clubs Phils. Inc. and Swing Magazine.

Cebu Country Club sent two teams to the grand finals by finishing 1-3 in the Visayas-Mindanao satellite finals at the CCC. Iloilo Golf and Country Club placed second.

Southwoods and Riviera teams wound up 1-2 in the Luzon West finals held at The Orchard last week with Eagle Ridge finishing third.

Royal Northwoods topped the Luzon North finals over second placer Baguio Country Club and third placer Luisita.

Two other satellite finals are slated in different venues with Wack Wack hosting the Luzon East hostilities and Mt. Malarayat the Luzon South.

The top three teams from each of the five regional stages will advance to the grand finals of the event backed by Philippine Airlines, Mizuno, Hewlett Packard, Citibank, Rudy Project, Solar Sports, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and OIM.

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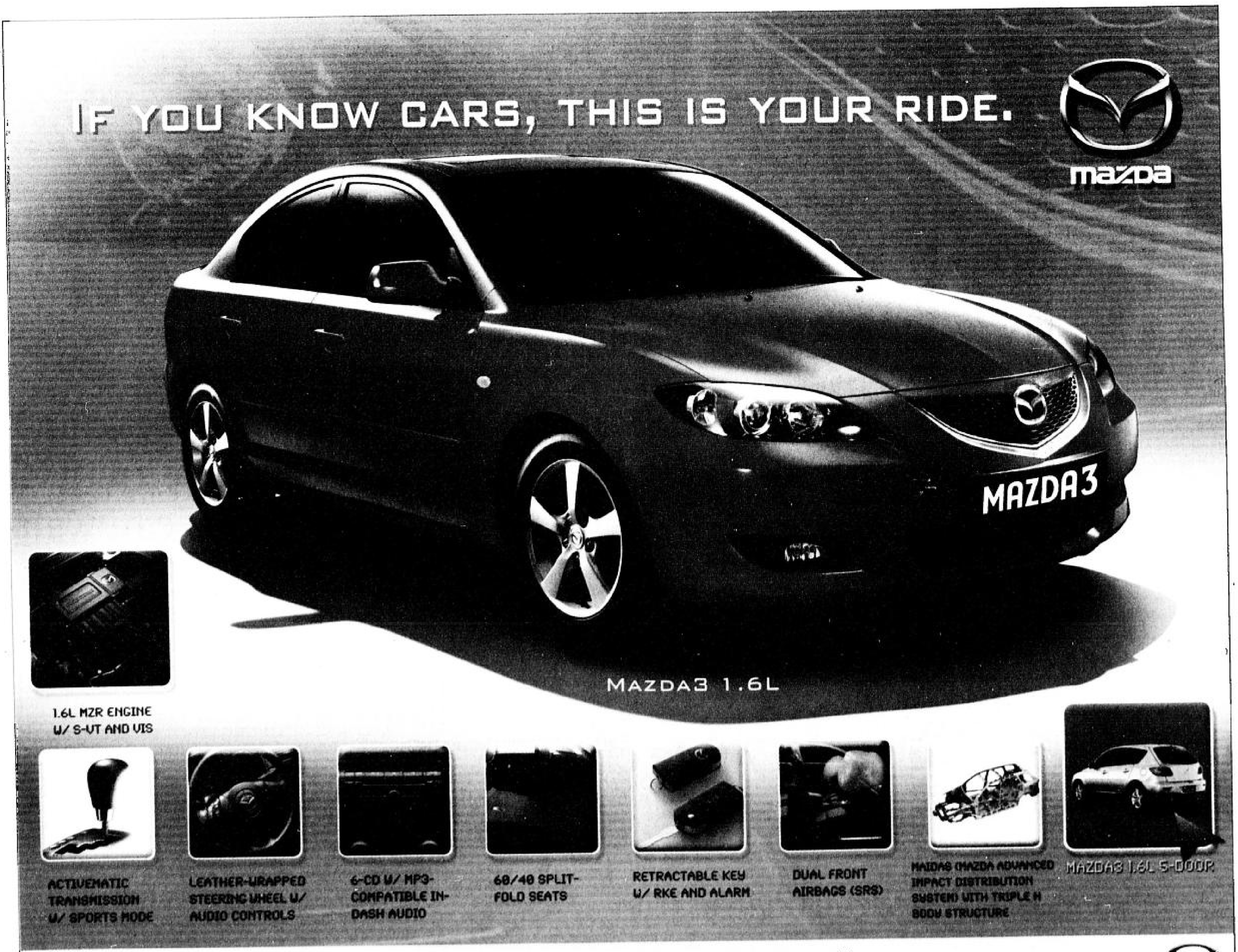
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Pulse-pounding action keeps Petersen's disaster flick afloat

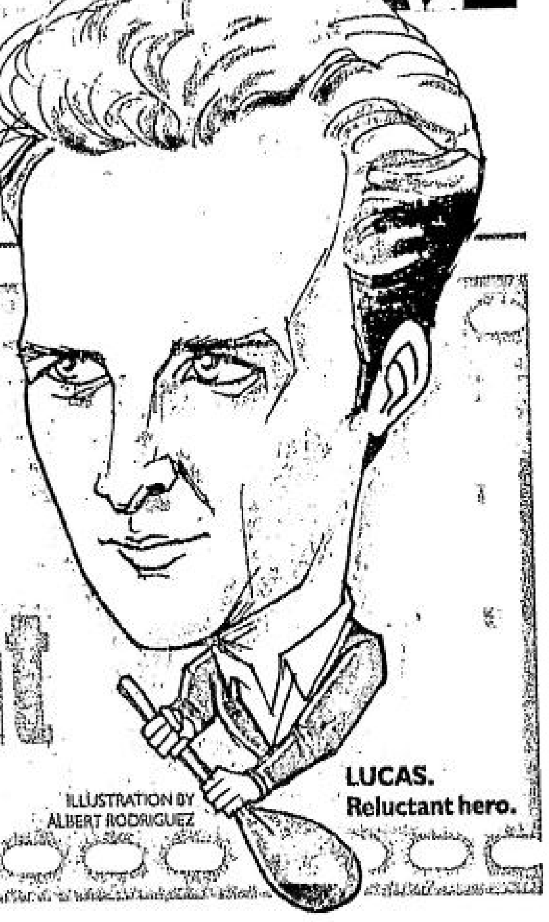


ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

LUCAS. Reluctant hero.

By Rito P. Asilo

"Poseidon"
D: Wolfgang Petersen
S: Josh Lucas, Kurt Russell

WOLFGANG PETERSEN THRIVES ON WELL-made, lavishly-produced popcorn flicks, like the Harrison Ford and Clint Eastwood starrers "Air Force One" and "In the Line of Fire," respectively. But, it's on water (1981's "Das Boot," 2000's "The Perfect Storm") where he truly shines.

The latest addition to Petersen's oeuvre is a reworking of 1972's "The Poseidon Adventure," about a group of survivors who become unlikely allies as they face seemingly insurmountable odds to squeeze, swim and claw their way out of the sinking luxury ship, Poseidon, after a 150-foot rogue wave turns the New York-bound vessel upside down in the middle of the North Atlantic ocean on New Year's Eve.

This time, the characters are different: Josh Lucas plays Dylan Johns, a professional gambler who finds himself playing reluctant hero to a feisty bunch of survivors, including Robert Ramsey (Kurt Russell), a former New York City mayor, and his daughter, Jenny (Emmy Rossum) and her beau, Chris (Mike Vogel); a mother-and-son pair (Jacinda Barrett and Jimmy Bennett, respectively);

A stowaway (Mia Maestro); a waiter (Freddy Rodriguez), another card shark, Lucky Larry (Kevin Dillon), and Richard Nelson (Richard Dreyfuss), a gay passenger who contemplates suicide after his lover fails to show up on board.

Petersen hardly falters when he cooks up his waterlogged, adrenaline-pumped stories. On point of action and adventure alone, the German auteur never misses a beat.

But, making a film eventful while keeping its story fresh, engaging and schmaltz-light is a tricky juggling act. Unfortunately, most of the production's protagonists don't go beyond the superficial character sketches that they are. And the sudsy lines they're required to deliver don't help, either.

Like the mythical cruise ship, Petersen's movie alternately sinks (from its overtly soggy melodramatic dialogue) and swims (due to its swift pacing), and is kept afloat by inspired performances (Russell, Barrett and the dashing Lucas), and by the director's ability to execute thrilling, edge-of-your-seat entertainment.

Petersen demonstrates his mastery at staging life-and-death situations. Despite its mush and bravado, however, this ship is no "Titanic." But, thrillseekers will find enough to shriek and squirm about as the film's protagonists race against time—and fight for their lives!

'Dance Fever' sets high terpsichorean standard

By Nestor U. Torre

EVERY WEEK ON "DANCE FEVER" (Sundays on ABC-5), the best young dancers in the Unites States compete to make it to the finals.

The weekly competitions are already top-level, so we could only imagine how tough the finals would be. Well, the final round of the dance competition *did* come to pass last Sunday, and it surpassed our high expectations.

Six weekly winners and one "wild card" entry competed for the $100,000 top prize. The Southern Belles came on first and came up with a "clogging" performance that had the tilt's judges raving.

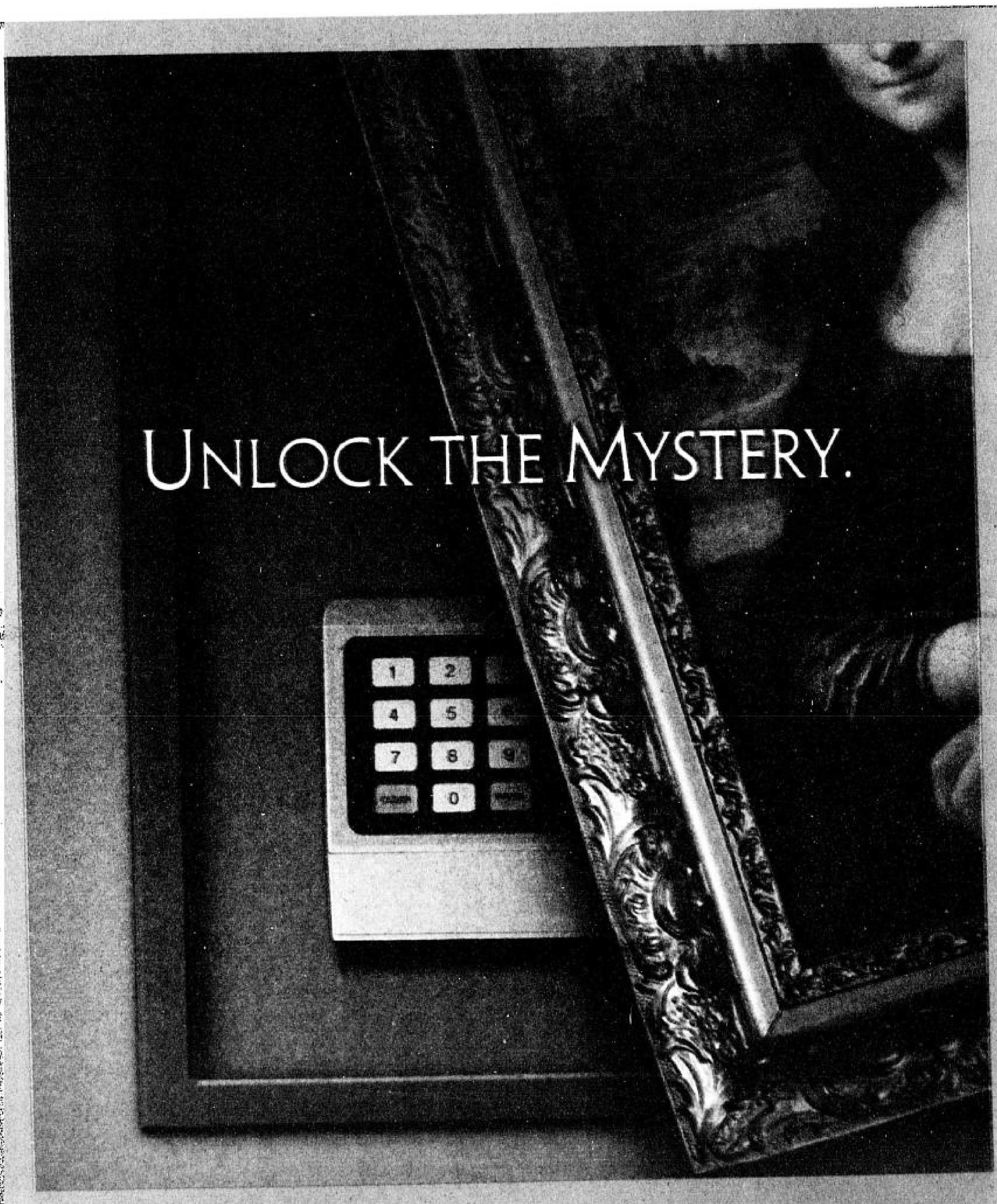
Difficult and classy

Funk & Fusion also got its share of plaudits, then Ryan and Diana did a really difficult and classy ballroom dancing number that had the judges fumbling for superlatives.

The "wild card" contestants, Jonathan and Sean, next went to town with their hip-hop number, but they were upstaged by the tilt's only solo entry, B-Boy Crumbs, who took hip-hop to an even higher level.

The last two bets, Live In Color and All That, were pretty similar (four male dancers each, doing creative variations on clogging), except the first group was black,

DANCE/ A2-2



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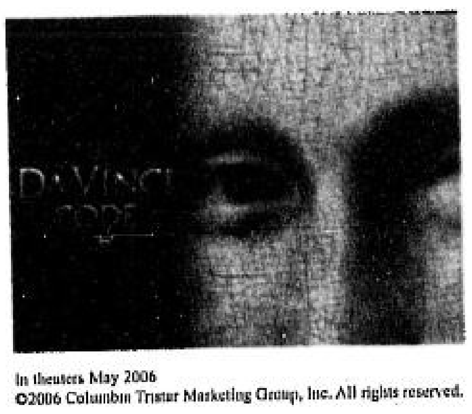

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Anthology compiles Dick Zamora's musical legacy

Love Songs
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ZAMORA. His music has endured through the decades.

By Behn Cervantes

DICK ZAMORA'S NAME has been synonymous with the Upsilon fraternity's music since 1951. The oldest frat on the UP campus has been at the forefront of cultural innovation since 1918.

Tutelage

In the field of music, Zamora stands out. At the UP Conservatory of Music, he mastered the piano under the tutelage of National Artist for Music, Antonio Molina, no less.

As a young Upsilonian, he joined forces with adventurous fellow members, Teddy Yabut and Mart Martell, to start the tradition of original Filipino musical presentations called Cavalcades.

The creative collaboration began with "Aloyan," a story of UP students who trek to the Cordillera Mountains during a summer break. A story of cultural conflict, it was also distinguished by Zamora's ingenious use of local flavor and musical traditions.

Dick wrote music for Martell's lyrics. In turn, Teddy gave it life on stage—as performed by enthusiastic Upsilonians and their sorority sisters, the Sigma Deltans.

Social injustice

Dick and Mart collaborated to produce original cavalcades for the next decade. Among them were "Hanaka," "Linda" and "Interior #14," musicals that daringly dealt with interracial and cultural conflict and social injustice.

Certainly, these themes were audacious for our time. Among the performers were Pilita Corrales, Juno Henares, Boy Camara, Joseph Olfindo and this author.

In between cavalcades, Dick composed music for movies and directed television shows. He continued to hone the fraternity's musical talents by conducting its choir in recitals, the annual Christmas caroling, and the Sigma Delta sorority's musicals.

In the early '60s, the fraternity choir participated in intercollegiate choral contests and romped off with top prizes. To be a member of the choir under Dick's strict tutelage was deemed a signal honor.

Dick's training in George Gershwin's style of music is apparent in some of his compositions. But, he also composed a serenely beautiful "Ama Namin," and fiery Spanish songs like "Que Mas?" and "Soñe," both sung by Pilita.

Sense of fun

Zamora's sense of fun is apparent in flighty numbers like "Walis ni Tenteng." Romance is at its most sentimental in "Sa Mga Pangarap, Giliw" and "Tunay na Pag-ibig."

It has been 54 years since Dick, Mart and Teddy first joined forces. But, Dick continues to collaborate with younger members of the fraternity. Recently, he composed "Could This Be Love?" to suit the emotive lyrics of Lenny de Jesus and Ramoncito Abad.

The duo thought it was time to put together Dick's significant musical compositions in a CD, "The Music of Dick Zamora."

Piano

Dondi Ong, Nanette Moscardon Maigue, Aileen Cura, Corrales and Camara interpreted the numbers, with Dick himself at the piano.

The choral numbers were performed by the UP Singing Ambassadors, while select fraternity members recorded the "Upsilon March" and "Walis ni Tenteng."

Zamora's music and lyrics have held up through the decades. They remain as romantic, poignant and meaningful today as they were over half a century ago!

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'Dance Fever'...

From page A2-1

while the second was W.A.S.P. They were both top-level acts, so the judges had a really hard time deciding which group was better.

When the judges finally announced their decisions, Ryan and Diana won third, All That copped second place, and Live In Color romped off with the title and the hefty cash prize that went along with it.

We understood why the judges voted the way they did, but our own personal best bet was the dancing-dervish duo of Ryan and Diana. We also thought that B-Boy Crumbs should have scored higher.

In our view, the solo and duo acts had a tougher time than the four-man groups, since more is really merrier, while the smaller acts have to work much harder to generate excitement and sustain viewers' attention.

Categories

In future, therefore, the competition could come up with "smaller" and "larger" categories, or concentrate on solo or duo acts for one season.

Those quibbles aside, however, we were thrilled to catch the "Dance Fever" finals, and hail it as a great showcase for new dance talents. They more than met the tilt's challenge, and inspired

DANCE/ A2-3

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	4 SENTINEL	5 AQUAMARINE	6 POSEIDON	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX POSEIDON 1:25, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:25 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 POSEIDON 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 POSEIDON 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
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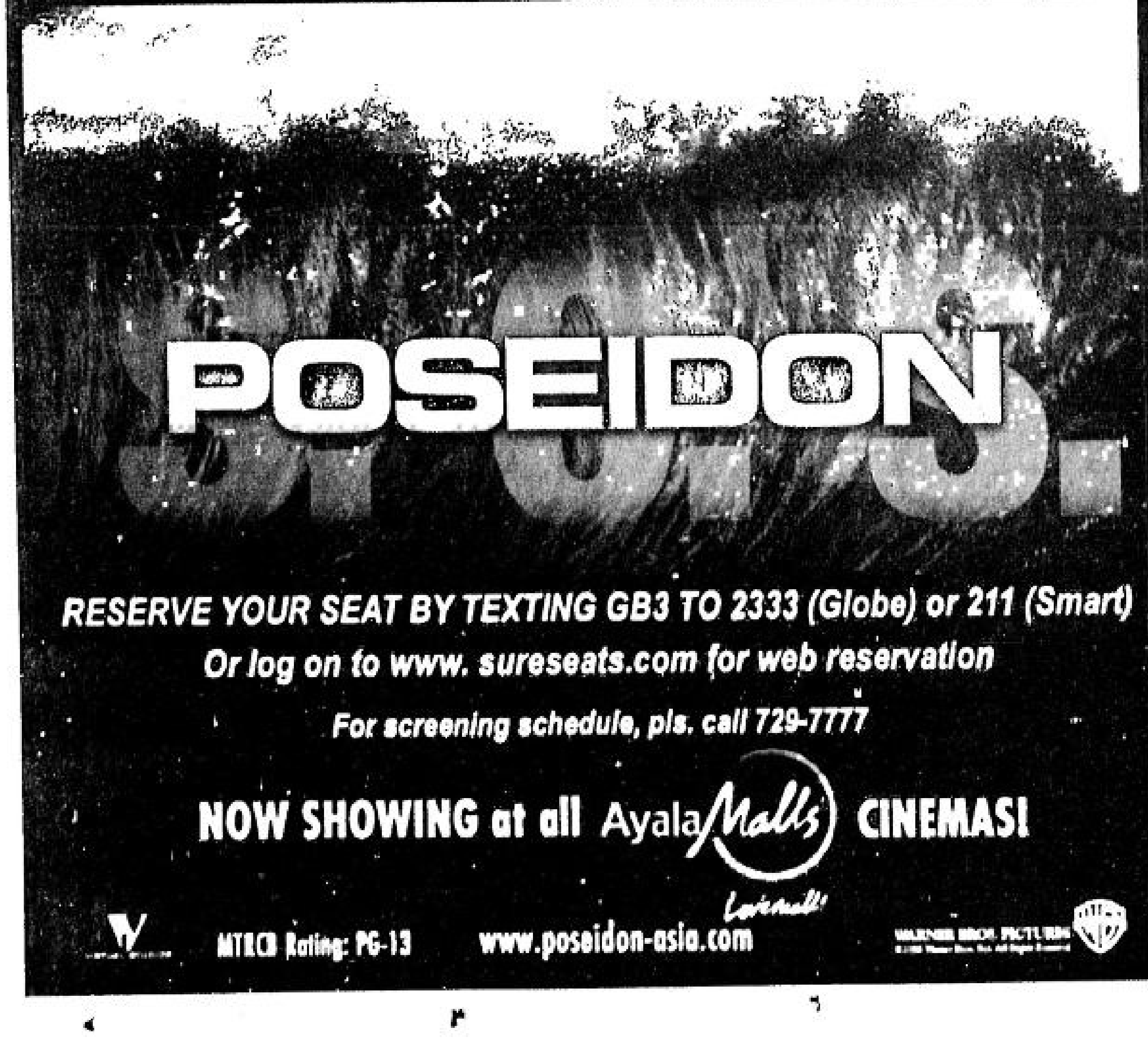
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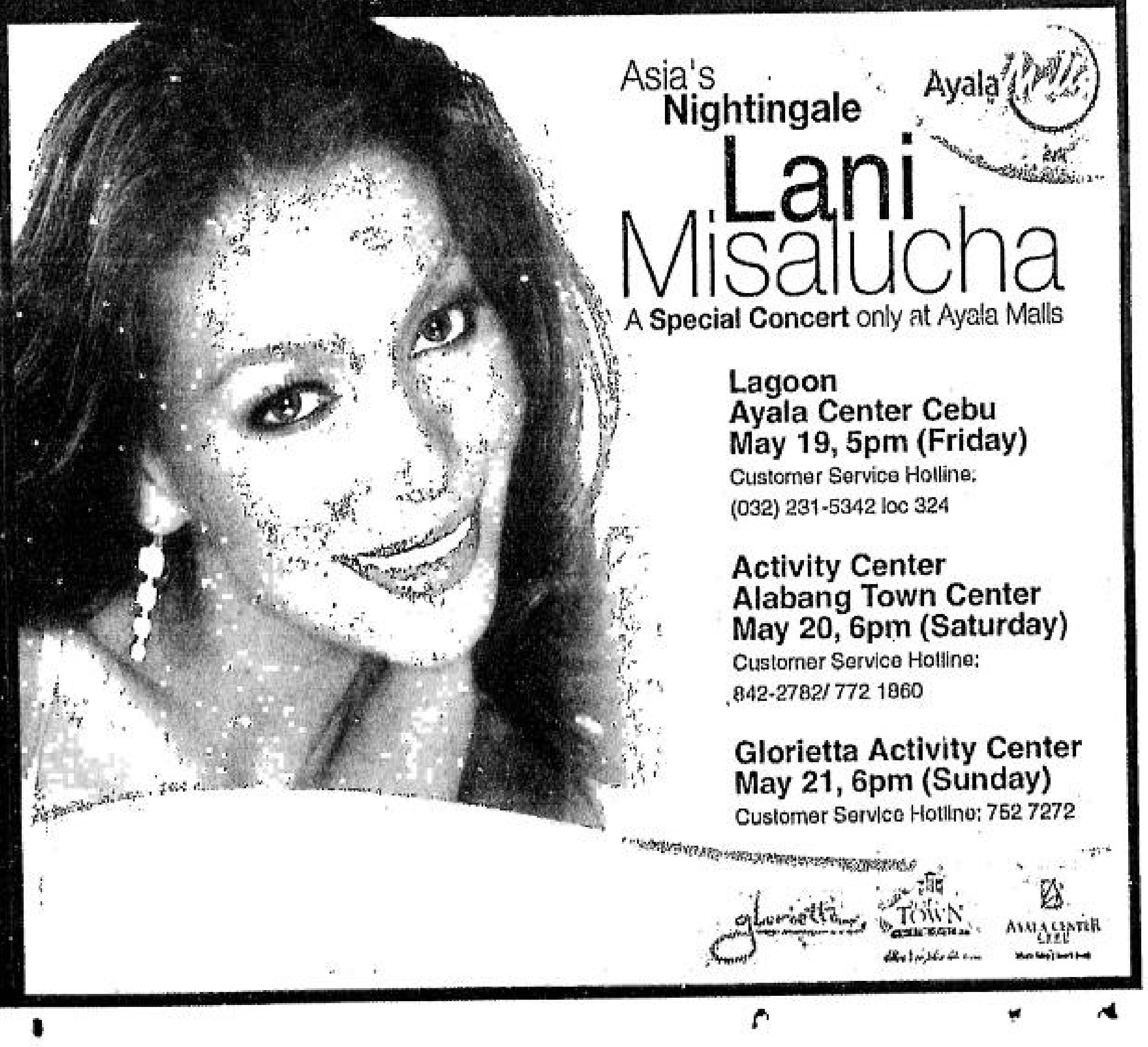
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A heart for photography

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

DR. ALISA P. BERNAN WAS WITH US in the Batanes Photo Safari, with her pal, Dr. Monserrat Velasquez. She belongs to a Muslim political clan—the Pendatuns—in Maguindanao.

After her family relocated to Davao from war-torn Cotabato, she thought of taking up Agriculture to tend to her father's farm.

Degree

Instead, her mom sent her to Manila to take up Medical Technology at FEU. She went back to Davao to get a degree in Medicine. After witnessing patients being revived after cardiac arrest, she decided to pursue cardiology.

According to Dr. Bernan, training for her fellowship at the Philippine Heart Center was grueling. Whenever she was assigned to the ER, she would take a heavy breakfast, because it could be her last meal for the day due to the volume of patients. The heavy workload almost made her quit. Looking back, she's glad she didn't!

Friends

To decompress, she and her friends go camping, scuba diving, trekking and river-crossing. She's always on the lookout for adventure.

Recently, Alisa rediscovered photography. She got her first camera at age 12. Ten years ago, she bought her own SLR, plus books on photography. The Batanes trip showed her knack for her new hobby.

BERNAN. Got her first camera at age 12.

Perfection

From page A2-4

other living entities. There are wives who refuse to shut up, husbands who don't know how to be selfless, or politicians who steal.

Living entities

When things become so messy, some people want to destroy everyone and everything around them by saying, "I try to make the world perfect, but living entities get in the way. So, I get rid of them."

But, even if he blows up every living creature around him, it's his own body that causes him trouble. As his body gets older, he suffers more from illnesses. And even when he's healthy, it's his mind that disturbs him.

We don't live in complete comfort. But, we should cultivate our need for the Perfectly Lovable Being.

Discomfort

When wise sages experience discomfort, the experience reminds them of their real home. The discomfort is a confirmation that their reality is not in the material world.

The solution is not to create a perfect world, *but* to cultivate our love for the Supreme Person. Pushing for perfection doesn't work. Once we accept this, we won't be hitting our heads against the wall. And frustration or anguish will no longer exist.

'Dance'...

From page A2-2

viewers because they set a high terpsichorean standard for subsequent seasons of the show to measure up to.

Amateurish

We couldn't help comparing the US competition to some amateurish, lazy and uncreative dance tilts held here, and we hope that "Dance Fever" will either inspire to shame their local counterparts to get their acts together.

Filipinos are potentially great dancers, and deserve a really challenging dance tilt to bring out the best in them.

'United 93' moves filmfest audience

NEW YORK—The first few hours of the Sept. 11 attacks have been imagined and replayed countless ways in the minds of many. But, for the first time, a movie of that nightmare premiered on the big screen.

"United 93," the first feature film to dramatize the Sept. 11, 2001 story, opened the Tribeca Film Festival recently.

Vision

"The vision is something we see in our heads everyday," said Jan Snyder, whose daughter Christine was on the flight. "It's time for this. The public needs to remember, they need to know what the families have gone through."

The 90-minute movie takes place in real time, and portrays the gripping story of the flight that left Newark, New Jersey, and crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers rallied against their hijackers and tried to regain control of the jet.

At the premiere, the screen went dark after the stomach-turning sequence showing the plane's nosedive. The theater was silent except for the gut-wrenching sobs and wails from the loge, where the relatives were seated together. *AP*

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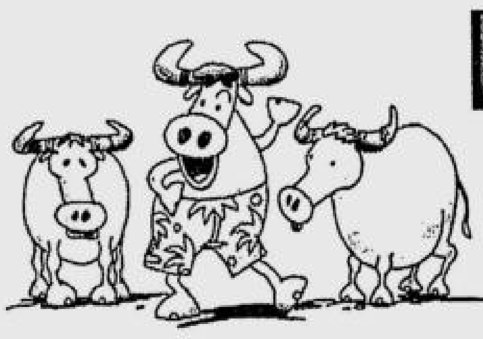

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1 SLITHER 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	5 SILENT HILL 1:30 4:30 6:10 9:00
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Charming tweeners' tale

By Noelani Torre

THERE AREN'T that many movies out there for the girls-who-are-not-quite-teens-yet set (also known as preteens and tweeners). Those that are out there invariably feature Hilary Duff (need we say more?). This is why, fluffy and predictable though it may be, the made-for-tweens movie, "Aquamarine," is worth a second look.

Best friends

Directed by Elizabeth Allen, "Aquamarine" stars Emma Roberts, Joanna "JoJo" Levesque and Sara Paxton. Set in a small Florida town (but shot in Australia), it tells the tale of best friends, Claire (Roberts) and Hailey (Levesque), who are days away from being separated from each other, because the latter is about to move to Australia.

In between moaning about their eventual separation, they swoon over cute lifeguard, Raymond (Jake McDorman) and try to hold their unfashionable, prepubescent own against the fashionable trio led by self-proclaimed town princess, Cecilia (Arielle Kebbel).

ROBERTS, PAXTON AND LEVESQUE. Team up to prove that love exists in Elizabeth Allen's comedy fantasy.

They jokingly say a prayer to the powers that be, and it's answered—in the form of one blonde, self-assured mermaid, who washes into Claire's swimming pool during a storm.

Aquamarine (Paxton) is bubbly and beautiful. She's escaping from an arranged marriage and must find love in three days' time before her father (the king of the ocean, no less) pulls her back into the deep.

Voice

Luckily for her, she gets to have legs without giving up her voice *ala* "The Little Mermaid," *but* only during the day *and* only *if* she keeps them completely dry.

She sets her sights on Raymond and enlists the help of Claire and Hailey in exchange for a wish. Deciding that friendship is more important than a cute lifeguard, they agree, and the usual fish-out-of-water scenario follows.

As mentioned, the plot is predictable, but it doesn't really take itself seriously. The two leads are refreshing and believable.

Roberts bears a resemblance to her famous aunt (yes, *that* Roberts). She is sweet as the sensitive Claire. For her part, pop star JoJo is also charming.

Makeover sessions

Scenes of shopping expeditions, makeover sessions, and marathon magazine readings may make you cringe, but they're staple fare for your average middle-class 13-year-old girl. In the end, the quest for love takes the back seat to friendship.

It sounds corny—and they do overstate it a bit so that it becomes somewhat didactic—but, it's commendable nonetheless.

Besides, you're allowed to be corny, bubbly and giggly when you're a tween: Just because you're too cute for words doesn't mean you *can't* be real!

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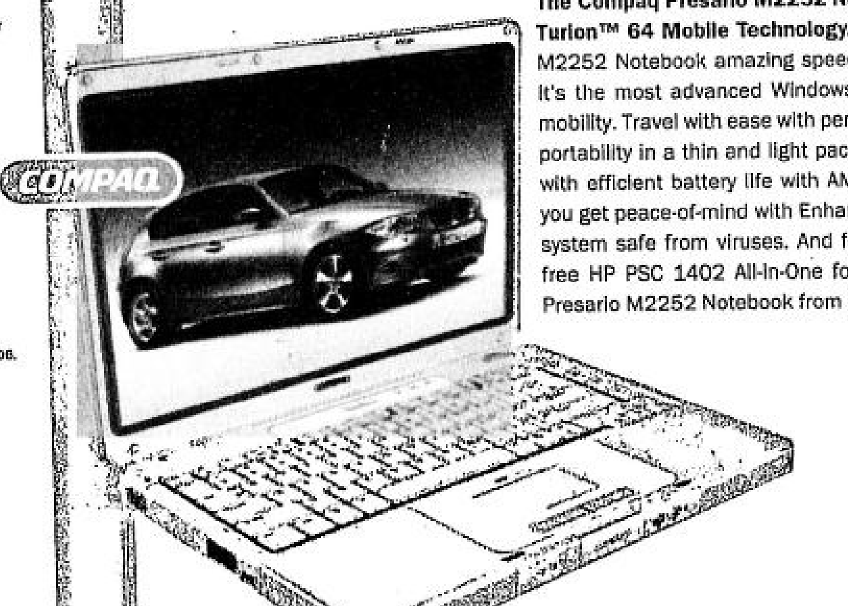
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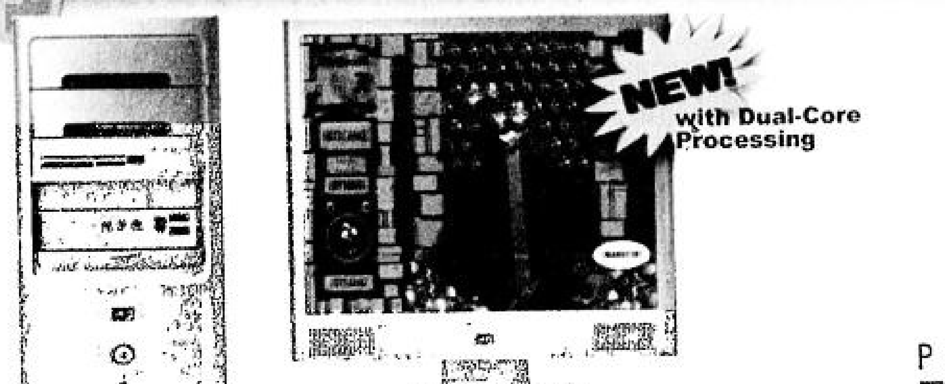

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SATURD Special

Celebrities as doting moms

VILLAROEL (WITH TWINS, CASSANDRA AND MAVERICK, RIGHT). Quality time.

By Jocelyn Valle

AS THREE OF LOCAL SHOW BIZ' BRIGHTest stars, Carmina Villaroel, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Ruffa Gutierrez are accorded special treatment in show biz functions. But, at home, they take the back seat to the real stars in their hearts: Their kids.

Carmina Villaroel admits to feeling guilty whenever she leaves her five-year-old twins, Maverick and Cassandra, at home to work. "I am constantly on the phone with them. I am a hands-on mom," she explains.

Busy schedule

Despite her busy TV schedule for "Sis," "Nuts Entertainment," "Majika" and "Day-off," she makes it a point to spend quality time with her kids. "We all sleep in one bed. We watch TV or movies together. My daughter likes to read and loves her 'Princess' books."

Are the twins aware that their parents are show biz personalities? "*Hindi nila alam ang* concept *ng pagiging artista*," replies Carmina. "*Noong bata ako, ganoon din ako*. Exposed *naman sila sa trabaho namin ni*Zoren (Legaspi) because he visits me on the set with the kids."

Zsa Zsa Padilla, meanwhile, shares that her children, Karylle, Nicole and Zia, have been accustomed to her hectic schedule as a performer. "So, I don't hear them complain that I don't spend time with them," she points out.

Daughters

That doesn't mean, though, that mother and daughters don't miss one another. They look forward to watching movies together and dining out. They also go on vacations every year.

Zsa Zsa, who plays the biological mother of Sarah Geronimo on ABS-CBN's "Bituing Walang Ningning," enthuses that raising three girls isn't so difficult. "They have different personalities—but, they all know what they want," she observes.

"I'm lucky that their eldest sister, Karylle, is such a good role model. She started singing at 18, but she was able to finish college at the Ateneo. My middle child, Nicole, wants to take up a business course, and Zia wants to be in show business. I find no need to have a son. I'm so lucky to have been blessed with three wonderful, intelligent children."

Ruffa Gutierrez has two daughters, Lorin and Venice. "I love being mom to energetic toddlers!," she beams.

Bedtime stories

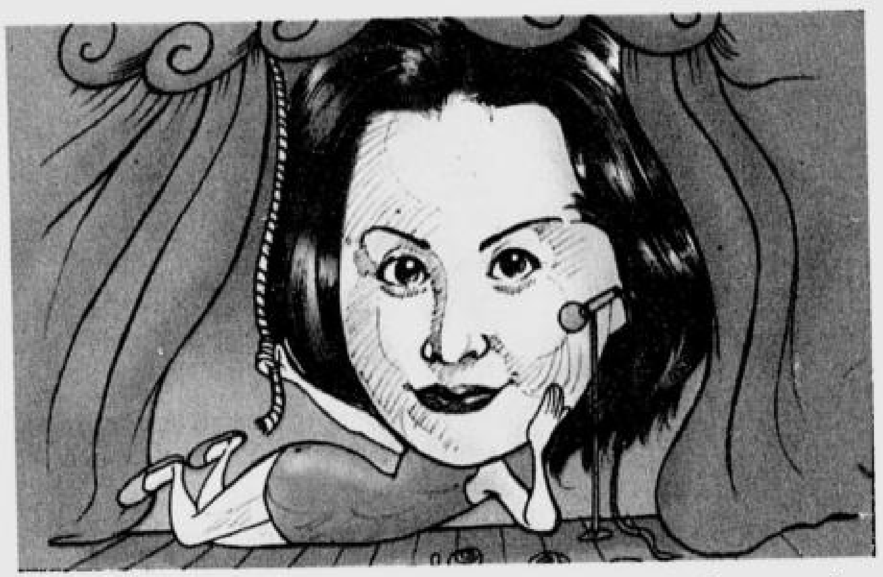
The jetsetting mother and her half-Turkish daughters find joy in simple activities like reading bedtime stories or singing nursery rhymes.

When asked if she'd want her girls to become beauty queens and actresses like her, Ruffa gives a cautious response: "I would encourage them to follow their dreams, be God-fearing individuals and finish their studies.

"I'm proud of everything that I have accomplished, but if you aren't made of sterner stuff, it isn't easy ro deal with the intrigues of the film industry!"

NVC's 'Aspects of Love' acclaimed in Singapore

By Rito P. Asilo



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STAGING A MUSICAL IS NEVER AN easy task. We should know: In the past year alone, we were part of the creative teams of two newly-minted but otherwise hugely successful original Filipino musicals, "Pag-ibig sa Bayan" and "Birhen ng Caysasay"). Logistical issues pile up further when these productions take wings and are toured around the country.

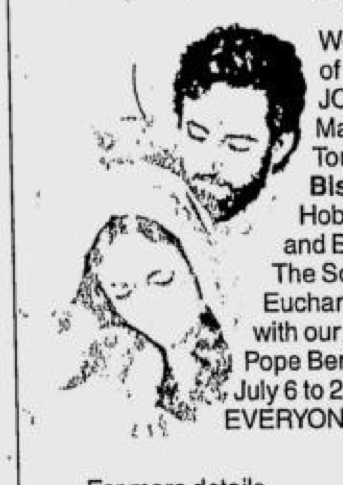
Stakes

The stakes are even higher if you bring shows abroad. In New Voice's case, the Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, "Aspects of Love," with a 28-man production team, to theater-savvy Singapore, which sees touring productions from the West End and Broadway all the time.

Following five previous full-house runs of the controversial "The Vagina Monologues" in the prosperous city-state, the New Voice Company wanted to test the musical waters by bringing its critically-acclaimed chamber version of "Aspects of Love" to Singapore.

When the Webber musical finally opened at the Drama Centre of the sprawling National Library complex last April 28, we were on tenterhooks. Productions of "West Side Story" and "Death and the Maiden" were running simultaneously—and "Grease"

NVC'S/ A3-2



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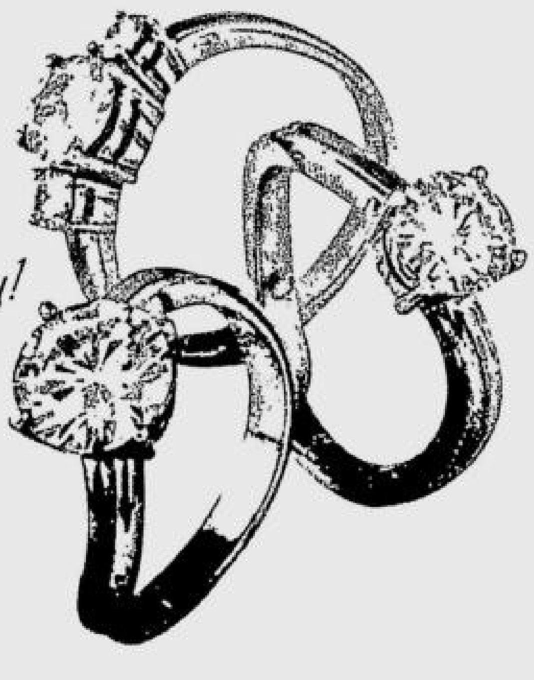

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BOOTS BARBA AND PAOLO BEDIONES

The mom behind the man

HOST, ADVENTURER, AND PERENNIAL bachelor Paolo Bediones is at the top of his game. He is one of the most recognizable TV personalities around, thanks to his consistently top-rated shows, "Extra Challenge" and "S-Files." He has been hailed the King of Philippine Reality TV. He also has enough star power to pull in a growing number of endorsements.

PAOLO AND MOTHER. Special bond.

But behind Paolo's smart, driven and media savvy persona is a simple guy with a hint of mischief, a kind disposition and a soft spot for his mom. Call him a mama's boy if you will. You can't stop Paolo from gushing over his "cool" mom, Boots Barba.

"She is everything you can ask for—nurturing mother, a sensitive friend, a fun buddy and an effective shock absorber. Of course, just like many mothers, she tends to nag, but that's the best reminder that she loves her children very much," says Paolo.

Only boy

Boots admits to sharing a special bond with her *"unico hijo"* Paolo, the only boy among her four children: "We have always had a very special mother and son relationship. I am able to tell if something ails him just by the sound of his voice, the look in his eyes, or his body language.

"Sometimes, he will not admit anything, but I know better because my mother's instinct has always proven me right," confides Boots.

While she is a hands-on mom who still tries to dote on all her four children, she knows when to stay close and when to keep her distance.

Phone call

"Paolo has lived independently for many years, but he knows that I will always be there for him. I am just a phone call or text message away," she shares.

For his part, Paolo beams, "My mom taught me the right values at an early age. She taught me to treat everybody with respect, the value of hard work, how to love freely without limits, how to make decisions on my own, to stand up for what I believe—and, most importantly, my mother encourages me to be myself," reveals Paolo.

Big event

Mother's Day is a big event in Boots' calendar. It is the time when she becomes the queen of the household. It's also a time to remember her own mother who, she recalls, finds happiness in a simple Kiss.

"I never knew that my mother liked Hershey's Kisses, until I gave her a huge Hershey's Kiss one Mother's Day. It made her very happy, so ever since, I would give it to her on Mother's Day, Christmas and her birthday!"

Now, it's Paolo and his sisters, Lara, Sandy and Cristina's turn to pay tribute to their mom. Boots recalls one particular event that brought her to tears:

"It was the Mother's Day celebration that doubled as her 50th birthday. Boots recounts that Paolo asked her to postpone their festivities because he and his sisters were busy.

"I said, 'Okay. No problem.' A few days later, on my birthday, my brother Vic called me up and said he was taking us to dinner… He brought us to the Old Swiss Inn.

Bouquet

"After we were seated, Lara made her entrance with a big bouquet of flowers! Paolo had sent her a ticket so she could come home from Paris to attend my birthday! That was why they had to postpone the celebration. She couldn't arrive in time for Mother's Day because flights were fully booked, but she made it for my birthday," she says, her eyes misting over.

For Paolo, springing such a Mother's Day *cum* birthday surprise was well worth the effort, because he knew it would make his mom happy. He hopes to bring her more happiness in every way he can!

NVC's…

From page A3-1

was about to open. But, we were confident our topnotch artists would pull it off!

This time, Monique Wilson, who starred in and directed the Manila staging, had co-director Dee Cannon by her side. Dee is the head acting coach of London's prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. She brought a fresh perspective to the foundation laid out by Monique, spruced up scenic actions, and clarified character motivations from scene to scene.

Enthusiastic

The enthusiastic audience took note of the group's passion and dedication. Fortunately, so did Singapore's nitpicky press: Changi Express' Sheryl Quek and Ng Hui Hsien encouraged die-hard romantics not to miss the show.

Likewise, NVC's hard work wasn't lost on June Cheong of The Straits Times, Singapore's leading English-language broadsheet, who described "Aspects" as "a labor of love."

She praised the show for its "eloquent use of the minimal set and cast…The production hit all the right notes, balancing

NVC'S/ A3-5

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4 (DOLBY) M. I. - 3

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2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 BANDIDAS

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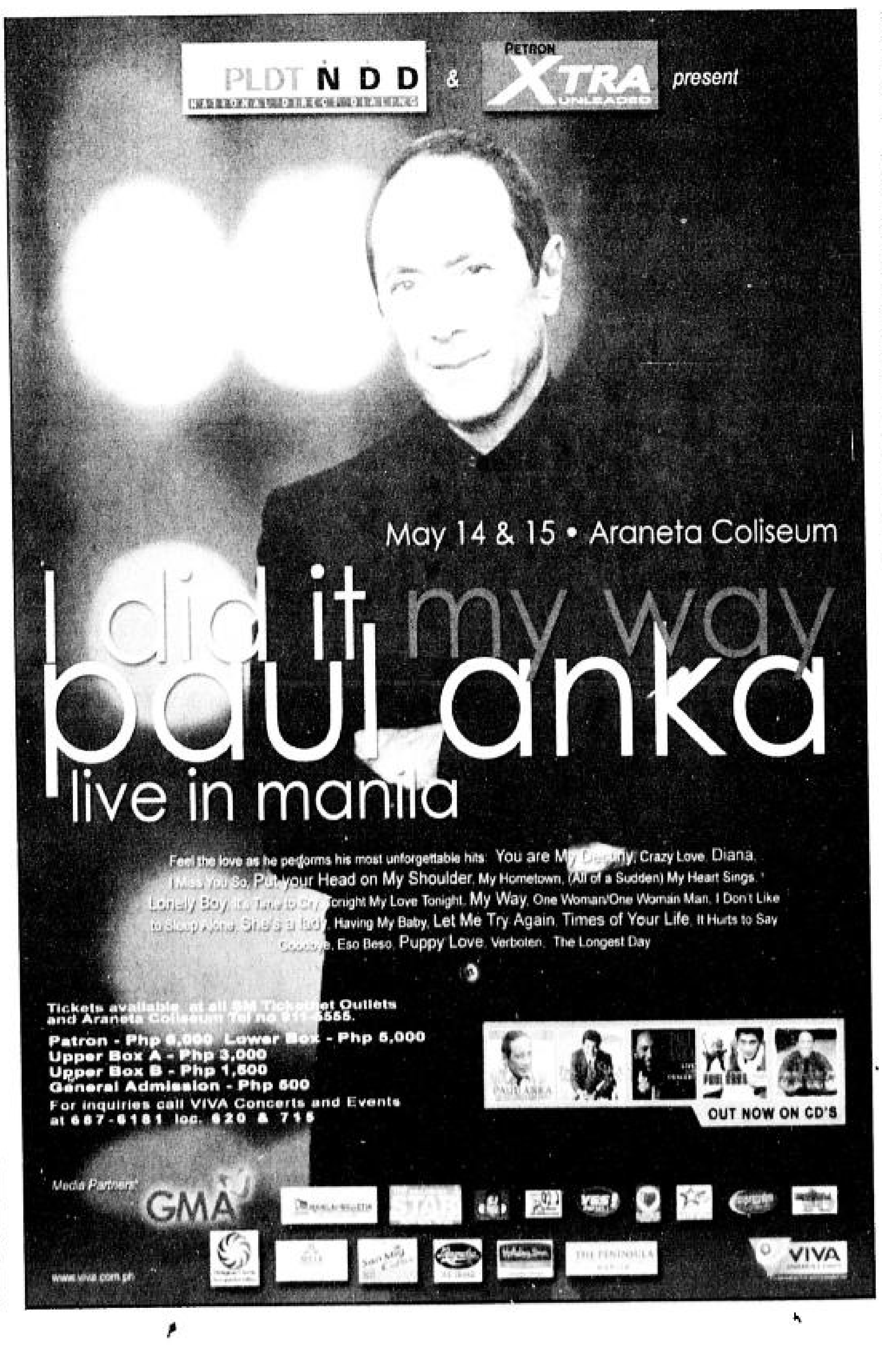
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Room at the top for Elijah Castillo

By Nestor U. Torre

RIGHT AFTER WE WROTE ABOUT Elijah Castillo last April 29, we got the great news that the title role player of Doy del Mundo's digital feature, "Pepot Artista" had won the best actor award in the recently-concluded Singapore Film Festival.

It's a signal honor not just for the talented child actor but also for all Filipino film people, so we thank Elijah for giving us a psychic boost just when we need it most.

Winsome portrayal

We aren't surprised that the Singapore filmfest judges were disarmed by Elijah's winsome portrayal of Pepot, the filmstruck kid whose dream of show biz stardom keeps getting comically frustrated in the course of Del Mundo's delightful and perceptive movie (which won the best picture award at last year's Cinemalaya competition).

Elijah's best suit as a young performer is his natural acting style. Coupled with his genuine goodness as a person, his precocious thespic talent and his total lack of conceit and *porma*, this positive trait infuses his stage and film portrayals with truth and empathy.

We know whereof we speak, because we've directed young Elijah in major roles in two stage musicals—"Birhen ng Caysasay" at the CCP, and "Pag-ibig sa Bayan" at Meralco Theater.

In both instances, Elijah impressed viewers with his felt performances, which were exceptionally textured and insightful for someone so young.

Granted, at the start of rehearsals, he had a difficult time performing in a stage musical, not because he wasn't a good actor, but because he was used to acting for the movie camera, so his portrayal was too "small" for the musical stage.

More intense emotions

Soon, however, Elijah understood the differing thespic requirements of the cinema and theater, and was able to summon up the more intense emotions and "larger" performance style that were better suited to musical theater.

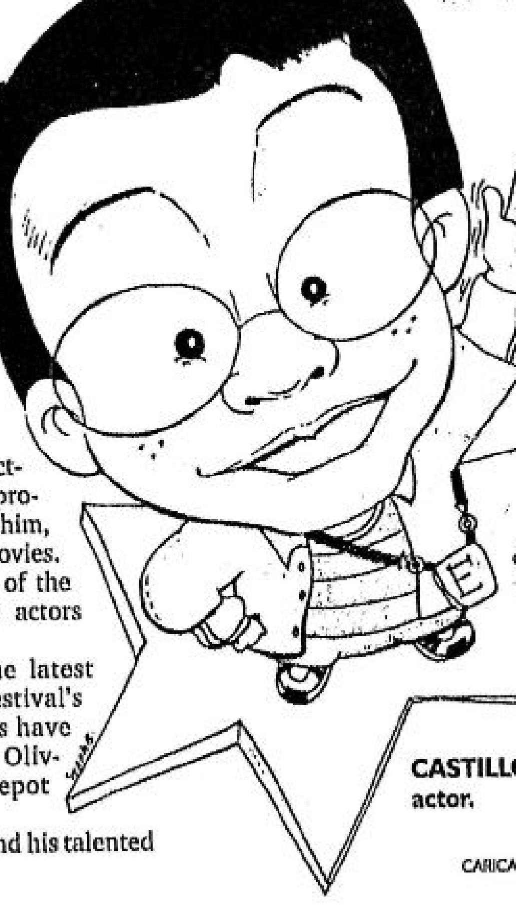
This ability to adjust his thespic "attack" is a testament to Elijah's open-mindedness and trust in his director, traits that other young actors would do well to similarly acquire.

Hardworking and gifted

Now that Elijah is an international acting awardee, we trust that mainstream producers here will finally take notice of him, and cast him in their TV shows and movies. They won't be sorry, because he's one of the most hardworking and gifted young actors around.

Elijah's victory in Singapore is the latest feather in the 2005 Cinemalaya festival's cap. Most of the international awards have gone to "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," but now it's the turn of "Pepot Artista" to do us proud.

Congratulations and thanks to Doy and his talented cast and crew!



CASTILLO. Natural actor.

CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

MOTHERS ARE THE BEST

The instinctive nature of mothering comes to the fore many times throughout a child's life, particularly when it is needed most.[1] A mother knows what her child needs and hastens to give it to him even before he asks. And when a mother gives her best to her child, she gives him one of the greatest gifts she can give—just like Mrs. Gwendolyn Cariño, mother of accelerated child Sabine Cariño.

Mrs. Cariño is a prime example of a mother able to play a multitude of roles, giving all of herself in order to let her child feel that the best care is given him all the time.[2]

A mother is a constant teacher, who continually helps her child learn. From his earliest days, even while in the womb, a child forms his perceptions and understanding of the world according to those of his mother. By her words and actions a mother sets the stage.[3] Jose Rizal recounted in several of his writings how much he owed his mother, his first teacher. "The education that I received since my earliest infancy was perhaps what has shaped my habits."[4]

A mother is a child's first source of tender love. Love is the most vital emotion for a child, particularly in his formative years, and his mother is its foundation.[5] A mother's love is what enables her to bear the pain of childbirth, to spend sleepless nights caring for her children, and put their needs above her own.

A mother is a wellspring of emotional support. In the role of her child's "first cheerleader," she encourages him in his various activities, and lets him know how proud of him she is. Mothers rejoice in the achievements of their children. And well they should, for these achievements are the fruit of their very best care. As the proud mother of an accelerated child, Mrs. Cariño discloses: "I love Sabine very much and I see to it that I do everything to help her become the best that she can be. That is why it is important that she gets the best – the best nutrition and the best environment for her to grow up in. And I am so proud that she is growing to be a very good daughter and a thoughtful friend. I am very happy to see her excel in her studies." Mothers are unique, special and irreplaceable.[6] It is because of them and what they go through that we enjoy the best care and love. "All that we are and all that we can be, we owe to our mothers," says Abraham Lincoln. Sabine Cariño agrees: "My mommy helps me do well in school. Thank you, mommy!"

To all mothers, Happy Mother's Day! You're the best!

---

[1] http://EzineArticles.com [2] http://www.embracedbythelight.com/mothers/tribute1.htm. Eadie, Betty. Celebrating Motherhood. 2004. [3] Ibid.
[4] http://www.geocities.com/sinupan/AlonzoT.htm
[5] http://www.raheelraza.com/Mother'sDay.htm [6] Ibid.

Wyeth

From your kiss, to your embrace.
From wiping my tears, to putting a smile on my face.
From staying at my side every night and day.
To supporting me every step of the way.

For always giving me your best,
thank you Mommy!

Sabine Cariño,
Skipped Nursery
Progress User for 2 years
Accelerated!
Gwendolyn Cariño
Sabine's mom
Happy Mother's Day
from Progress
Gold
From 1 year onwards
WYETH
Progress
GOLD
3

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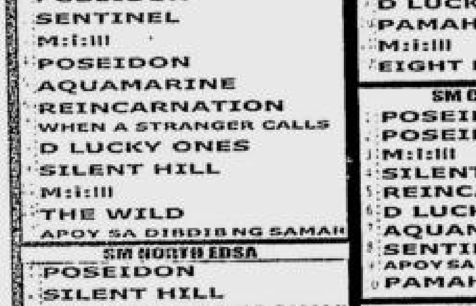

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POSEIDON
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APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
M:i:III

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APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
PAMAHIIN
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
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SILENT HILL
POSEIDON

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
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PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
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REINCARNATION
D LUCKY ONES

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M:i:III
SILENT HILL

SM CITY SUCAT
SILENT HILL
POSEIDON
M:i:III
POSEIDON

LUZON

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SHAGGY DOG
POSEIDON
M:i:III
SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY LUCENA
THE WILD
M:i:III
POSEIDON
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

SM CITY CLARK
NOW OPEN
POSEIDON
THE WILD
M:i:III
SILENT HILL
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
MAGING AKIN MULI

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POSEIDON
M:i:III
SILENT HILL
PAMAHIIN
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
SUBMERGED

SM CITY MOLINO
M:i:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR

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SHE'S THE MAN
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
M:i:III
POSEIDON

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
M:i:III
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SENTINEL
M:i:III
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D LUCKY ONES
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Confessions of a first-time mom

By Tintin P. Bersola-Babao

TINTIN AND ANTONIA. Good mothers make better daughters.

ON MOTHER'S DAY, THERE ARE countless stories written about moms. Well, *I'm* a first time mother. I gave birth to Antonia Sofia Julia on Feb. 26, 2005. She weighed nearly eight pounds, so I had a difficult time giving birth.

But, it's true what mothers say: Once the baby comes out, the unbearable birthing pains magically disappear, as if labor didn't happen.

Such is the miracle of childbirth!

Well, Antonia is a year and two months old now, and it's amazing how so many milestones can be achieved in so short a time. My favorites are:

1) Breastfeeding: I breastfed Antonia for eight months. According to the World Health Organization, infants must be breastfed for at least six months.

Milk supply

On hindsight, I should have pushed myself harder and breastfed longer. When my milk supply was dwindling, I called Dr. Elvira L. Henares-Esguerra and Nona D. Andaya-Castillo. Their profound advice, patience, prayers and support were such a big help to me when I was desperate to continue breastfeeding, yet my milk supply could no longer keep up with Antonia's growing demands.

Another confession: when I introduced the bottle and formula to Antonia, I felt jealous of the bottle!

Rivalry

Yes. I felt some sort of rivalry between me and the bottle which no longer contained my pumped breastmilk. I did not even want to hold the bottle because it no longer had my milk in it. I felt that the bottle was competing with me! That's how jealous I got. But now that Antonia is more than a year old, I've come to terms with the fact that not all mothers can breastfeed forever.

But when I breastfed my baby, I felt it was the best way to show a mother's purest love.

Let me also tell you how sorely I miss waking up every two hours in the middle of the night to offer my breasts to Antonia so she could feed on demand.

Never mind if I had sore nipples at first, or if I would get dizzy because I was sleep-deprived.

Breast pump

After I went back to work hosting "Magandang Umaga Pilipinas," during commercial breaks, I'd proceed to the make-up room where I would express milk, then use my reliable electric breast pump to collect it to bring home to my baby after the show.

Sometimes I'd bring Antonia with me to the studio. I would breastfeed her in the make-up room.

In restaurants, I'd just wear a bib or drape a shawl over my shoulder in order to be discreet. I dropped my inhibitions and had no qualms about breastfeeding in public. I realized that there is nothing to be ashamed of. And the public should accept it as a natural part of motherhood.

Skating rink

Good news to all breastfeeding moms: The first in-mall breastfeeding station has opened at the basement foodcourt area of Megamall Building-A, near the skating rink. Hurray!

I continue sharing what I know with new mothers in my workplace. They have a common problem: the work schedule is so toxic that they can no longer keep up. I give them articles on breastfeeding, and the contact numbers of breastfeeding support groups. (Call Dr. Andaya-Castillo at 271-0954 and 444-4716 or cell no. 0919-8395555.)

By the way, Antonia is a brown rice baby. I also don't give her anything with white sugar.

Other milestones

Other "mothering" milestones:

2) I was there the first time Antonia rolled over.

3) I was there when she took her first steps. I recorded that moment on video.

4) Her other milestones are well-documented: her first teeth, her first set of clothes or "onesies."

5) I have a journal wherein I write down the dates and notes of her many milestones—like the first word she uttered: "Mama." She was looking directly into my eyes from across the dining room when she uttered the word. How can a mother forget a moment like that?

6) The first and so far the only time Antonia fell—from the diaper changing table, landing, thankfully, on a thick rug. Everything happened so fast—I could not forgive myself—I was screaming for help and Antonia cried—not because she was in pain, but because she panicked upon hearing me scream.

At the hospital, Dr. Alma Enriquez assured me that Antonia was safe. It was a warning to me, never to be careless again. But, I also believe that babies do have angels who watch over them!

Challenges

These are just some of the trials, happy times and challenges I've experienced—and to think that this is just my first year as a mother! God help me, please, as I face the other challenges of motherhood in the years to come! With my loving and ever so patient, understanding and responsible husband, Julius, who is a doting daddy to Antonia, I know I will survive.

On Mother's Day, tomorrow, I also pay tribute to my own Mommy Ching. Mama, thank you for bringing me into this world, and for being so patient and generous. I will forever be grateful to you for all of your sacrifices.

We may not agree on some things, but we respect and love each other!

Thank you for bringing me up this way—with an independent mind. Thank you for all the values you taught me. I've learned to be prayerful because of you.

I love and appreciate you even more now that I, too, am a mother. It's true what they say: We become better daughters once we become mothers ourselves!

'Child of Our Time' on Hallmark

MONTAGE

ON MAY 28 AT 7:55 P.M., THE Hallmark Channel starts screening "Child of Our Time," a series that follows the lives of 25 babies in Britain born in the year 2000. In the 2004 series, the babies are now three-year-olds gearing up for pre-school.

LORD ROBERT WINSTON. Host of three-part documentary.

The three-part documentary explores a variety of child development issues in a "nature vs. nurture" perspective, as charted by doctor and fertility expert, Lord Robert Winston.

The first episode, "Zero to Hero," shows how, at a young age, children may be capable of mapping their personalities to delineate the popular kid from the loner. "Read My Lips," the second episode, focuses on effective communication. And the final episode, "The Making of Me," zeroes in on self-esteem.

Prior to May 28, Hallmark will screen earlier episodes in the series (from year 2000) on Sundays at 7:55 p.m.

Mellow 94.7

The new Mellow 94.7 provides welcome escape from the stresses of everyday life. It's always soothing to come home and listen to lovely sounds, or go about your work at the office to soft, calming music.

Mellow 94.7 provides the perfect blend of music and information. No matter what genre of music you're in the mood for, whether it's pop rock or R&B, if it's mellow, 94.7 has it, 24/7. Savor your mellow side!

Array's Technology Inc.

Array's Technology Inc., a leading cinema systems integrator, recently sponsored a seminar presentation on cutting-edge digital cinema technologies at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event tackled a complete filmmaking concept that could give the troubled Filipino movie industry a much-needed shot in the arm.

This will modernize and cut costs in the production, post-production and distribution phases of the film business.

In the process, piracy could be eradicated, as digital information is encrypted, making unauthorized duplication virtually impossible.

Array's Technology Inc. has designed, supplied, installed and maintained equipment in over 350 cinemas across the country. For more information, log on to www.arrays.com.ph.

'Makuha Ka sa Tikim'

Knorr's "Makuha Ka sa Tikim" (Channel 2, Saturday at 10:30 a.m.) today cooks up a seafood *luau* in Boracay for its third monthly finals. Eula Valdez, Cherry Pie Picache and Eugene Domingo host the cooking show.

Summer Music Blast

Winston's Summer Music Blast hits Cocomangas in Boracay for the second time tonight, with Bamboo and Sugarfree performing. Open only to rock enthusiasts who are at least 18 years old.

Bituin Escalante

OnStage at Greenbelt 1 is the venue for Bituin Escalante's first major concert tonight, with Mon David as special guest performer. Beneficiary is the Sagip-Buhay Medical Foundation. Call 891-9999 or 426-0103.

Barbie Almalbis

On May 19, it's Barbie Almalbis' turn to rock the Araneta Coliseum with her own solo concert. Guests are Kitchie Nadal, Ney Dimaculanagan and Rocksteddy. Call 9111-5555.

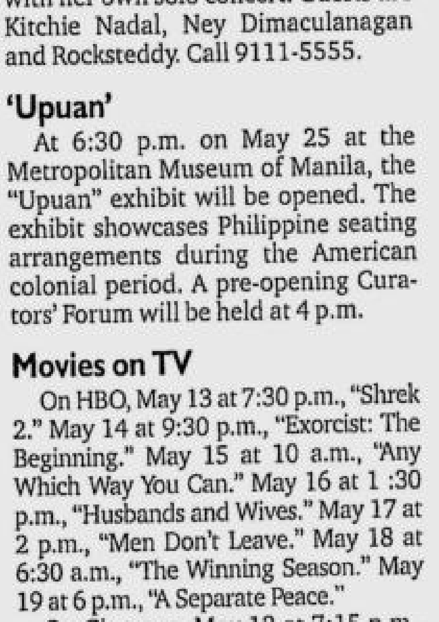
'Upuan'

At 6:30 p.m. on May 25 at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, the "Upuan" exhibit will be opened. The exhibit showcases Philippine seating arrangements during the American colonial period. A pre-opening Curators' Forum will be held at 4 p.m.

Movies on TV

On HBO, May 13 at 7:30 p.m., "Shrek 2." May 14 at 9:30 p.m., "Exorcist: The Beginning." May 15 at 10 a.m., "Any Which Way You Can." May 16 at 1 :30 p.m., "Husbands and Wives." May 17 at 2 p.m., "Men Don't Leave." May 18 at 6:30 a.m., "The Winning Season." May 19 at 6 p.m., "A Separate Peace."

On Cinemax, May 13 at 7:15 p.m., "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." May 14 at 9 p.m., "The Italian Job." May 15 at 2:50 p.m., "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." May 16 at 9:45 p.m., "Pleasantville." May 17 at 3 p.m., "Indiscreet." May 18 at 4 :20 a.m., "High Noon." May 19 at 3:50 p.m., "The Guns of Navarone."



ALMALBIS. Solo concert at the Big Dome.

'Wish' come true for Michaelangelo

By Remy M. Umerez

MICHAEL AND ANGELO MANAHAN are twentysomethings who have formed their own musical act, which they aptly call Michaelangelo.

Michael was formerly with the acoustic group MYMP, but he quit shortly after MYMP's debut album was declared gold.

Band

His brother Angelo, on the other hand, was part of the band Shortcake.

Michael recalls: "Without a group, I was 'paralyzed' temporarily. I love music so much, so I didn't mind starting all over again. I went back to school and rehearsed with my brother every weekend, which gave me the idea of forming a "brother-act" duo like the Carpenters.

"I requested the Tapika restaurant's management to try us out for one night. When the crowd appeared pleased, Boss Vincent asked us to stay on."

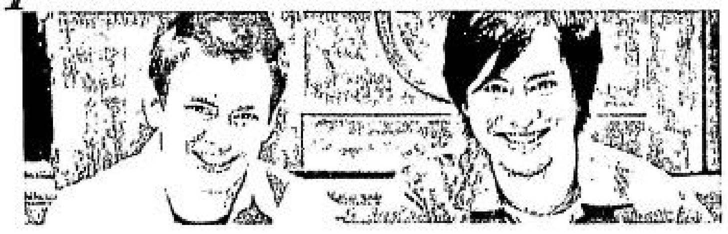
Viva Records has just released "Wish," the debut album of the Manahan brothers. "It has been a long journey, but with a fulfilling ending," Mike exclaims.

The album features two OPM songs ("Wish" and "Abot Kamay"), both composed by Mike. A third cut, "Trapik," was composed by Richard Poon.

Remakes

The rest of the CD's selections are remakes. They include "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," "Never Surrender," "Interstate Love Song," "Space Oddity" and "Rainbow Connection."

The music video of "Wish" is currently one of MYX's most requested songs.



MICHAEL AND ANGELO MANAHAN. Musical "brother act."

Deal-breakers and makers on 'PBB's' teen edition

By Nestor U. Torre

WE'RE ASSURED BY ABS-CBN THAT, BEfore being chosen, the teen housemates of the current edition of "Pinoy Big Brother" were given psychological tests to prove that they could deal with the stresses and challenges of the popular reality show.

Fine, but what viewers want to know is, if the teen housemates passed psychological muster, why did one of them, Aldred, quit during the show's very first week?

Loneliness

The perceived deal-breakers in Aldred's case were loneliness and lack of belongingness. Well, didn't these incipient chinks in his armor show up during those qualifying psychological tests?

We also wonder why some other young housemates have been exhibiting such neurotic tendencies, like crying a blue streak, slipping into a blue funk, and other symptoms of—well, the blues.

And why verbal if not physical violence has been displayed by some of the housebound teens. Now, we know that young people can be prone to emotional or hormonal displays of negative behavior. But, why is there so much of it on "PBB" this time around?

A bright ray of light in the encircling gloom and doom is provided by the occasional tasks that the teens are made to perform, to develop their team spirit, promote bonding, and encourage them to help one another in various inspiring ways.

The show should really go in for more of this, since the youth *are* the hope of the fatherland, and viewers feel great when they see teens shown in a good light on TV, instead of constantly bickering, pouting, complaining, competing, and generally making cute asses of themselves.

Romantic affection

We also feel OK about the teens' displays of romantic affection—isn't this what post-adolescence is supposed to be about, especially as teens see it?

After a while, however, the crushes, professions of love, rejection, resulting depression, loud protests and self-pitying ululations do get to be a drag. Can't they concern themselves about anything *else*?

The teens we know in our universe do all that, *but* they also occasionally talk about their studies, deal with social and topical issues, and relate to the big, wide world.

We've been catching glimpses of "PBB" for a number of days now, but we have yet to see much of that alternative awareness going on.

Target audience

Is it because it's not felt to be involving or entertaining for the show's target audience? Or, is it because these handpicked teens couldn't care less? If so, why did the show make such a big deal about some of the housemates' intelligence and well-rounded personalities?

Now, we don't mean to suggest that "PBB's" teen edition should transform itself into an intensely "relevant" and "significant" viewing experience—perish the thought.

All we're saying is that, since "PBB" bills itself as *"ang teleserye ng totoong buhay,"* we should see more of that *"totoong buhay"* making itself felt in the show's arid TV universe. Is that much too big an adjustment to make?

NVC's . . .

From page A3-2

the emotional antics with sympathetic characters."

While she griped about the production's slower second act, she nevertheless complimented the performances delivered by its cast: "Monique Wilson displayed remarkable emotional depth. Her polished voice was rich and mellow, wrapping itself easily around the high notes like a heady intoxication of buttery gin," "Jake Macapagal charmed," "Leo Rialp's baritone was balm to the ears," etc.

Cheong even noted the solid work of the ensemble, for "frequently doubling up as the props team, a move that added camaraderie and buzz to the crowd scenes."

Theater-honed actors

But, this would not have been possible without NVC's pool of theater-honed actors: Wilson, Jake Macapagal, Jenny Jamora, Nikki Ventosa, Julia Abueva, Topper Fabregas, Angela Padilla, Gina Samson, Mika Margolles, Dandy Ramos, Amiel Mendoza, Anabel Bosch, Nelson Caruncho, Ronalou San Pedro, Gabby Buencamino and Lily Chu.

The production team includes executive producer Rossana Abueva, Dexter Santos (for choreography), Mary Loh (marketing/promotions), Martin Esteva (light design), Jamie

NVC'S/ A3-6

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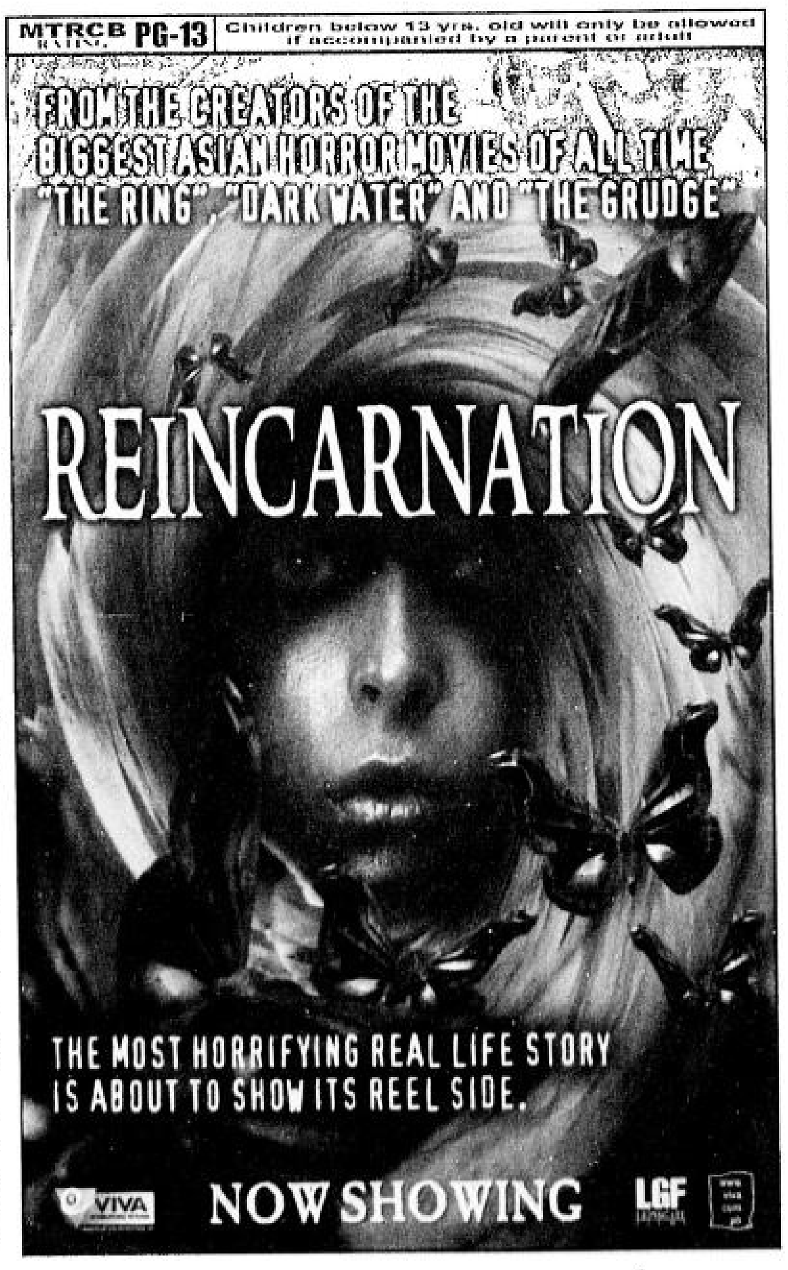

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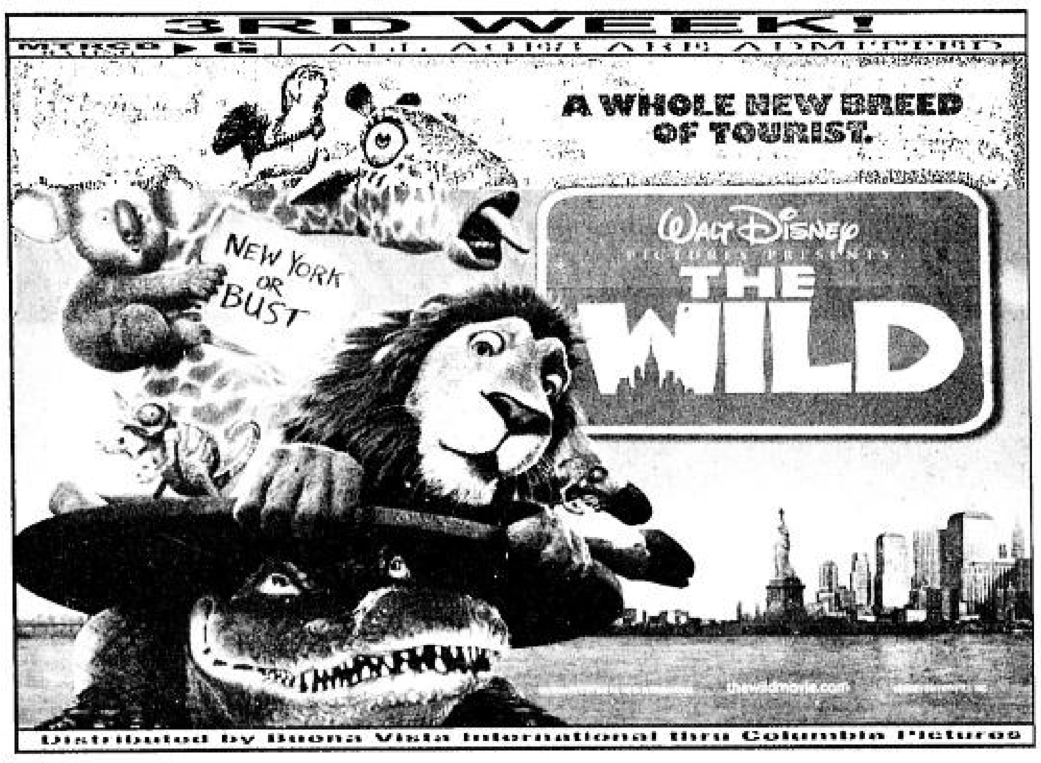

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Breath of fresh air on television

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez

"JUDGING AMY" IS A BREATH OF FRESH air amidst the rubbish on television. Aired from Mondays to Wednesdays on the Hallmark Channel, it is a moving and insightful family drama about three generations of women who live together. It is also about how children of this generation should be raised by parents (and grandparents).

Plot

Its plot revolves around the personal and professional lives of Judge Amy Gray (portrayed by its creator and executive producer, Amy Brenneman), a no-nonsense family court judge, divorcee and mother of 12-year-old Lauren (Karle Warren), and of Maxine, the judge's mother (Tyne Daly), a tough-talking, highly-principled government social worker, and the widowed mother of Peter, a successful insurance agent (Marcus Giamatti), and journalist Vincent (Dan Futterman).

"Judging Amy" is based on the real-life experiences of Brenneman's mother, a superior court judge, who was one of the first women to graduate from Harvard. It shows parents how to deal with child geniuses who have no regard for authority, and how self-absorbed parents can misguide their children.

The series presents scenarios in which women striving to become role models for their children need not abolish their humanity.

Search for love

Amy, in her search for love, ends up in the arms of a fellow judge, a young teacher, and a doctor. Maxine meets a top businessman (Richard Crenna) and manages to break his heart, because she figures they cannot adapt to the circumstances of a long-distance relationship. Later, she goes through the anguish and pain of dealing with his sudden death—48 hours *before* their wedding!

BRENNEMAN. Plays no-nonsense family court judge.

Welcome respite

The series is a welcome respite from the "garbage" that offends the sensibilities and intelligence of viewers. Surely, we want to be liberated from TV shows in which contestants are made to chew and swallow bulls' testicles or worms, from celebrities who brag about their scandalous relationships, from religious programs that malign and attack each other.

We are sick and tired of them! We hope they will be thrown away—*never* to be retrieved again.

NVC's . . .

From page A3-5

Wilson (technical direction), Lisa Santos (stage management), Ronalyn de Lim and Jonas Abueva (production management), and Veronica Kallos and Michelle Nicolasora at the piano.

This time around, NVC was lucky to get JetStar Asia and the Royal Plaza on Scotts as its main sponsors. Without them, it would have been hard to fly in and house the relatively big team for the company's 16-day theatrical adventure.

Rehearsal process

For our part, after directing many of NVC's previous productions, we were just happy to take part in and absorb the protracted rehearsal process exclusively as an actor. To say the least, it was a breather to just focus on the character we played, rather than think of every single aspect of the production.

We found the heady experience empowering. Indeed, working on characterization and text made us a tad more confident about our craft. But, as it is, the work of an actor is never done.

Since 1999, NVC has been touring its shows—from Singapore and Hong Kong to Scotland and Japan. With "Aspects of Love," NVC has marked another milestone.

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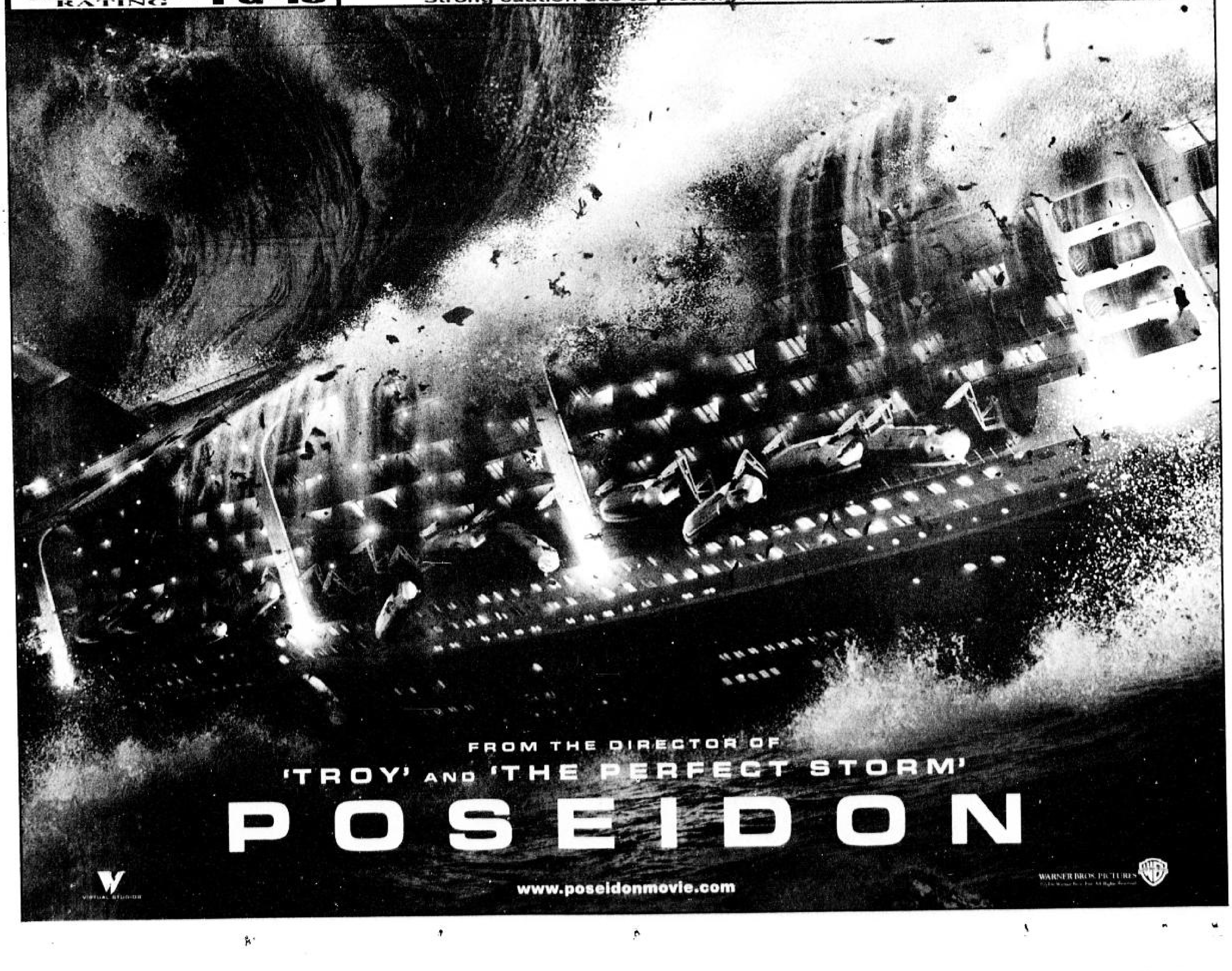
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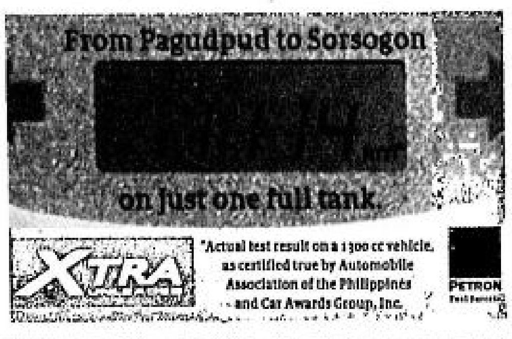

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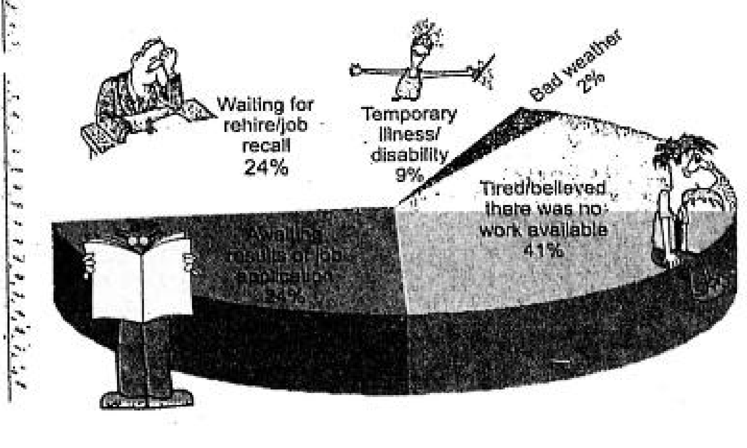
Landbank, DBP eye 70% of OFW bank

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Reasons behind unemployment (January 2006)

More than half of the 2.8 million unemployed do not look for work anymore, as two in every five were either too tired, or believed there was no work available for them.



Source: Highlights of the January 2006 Labor Force Survey Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics
Kate Pedroso PDI Research

To consolidate remittance businesses in new firm

By Doriş C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES AND DEVELOPment Bank of the Philippines plan to jointly acquire up to 70 percent of the Malacañang-backed P1-billion Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) Bank to be created out of Philippine Postal Bank.

During the bank's quarterly briefing Thursday night, Landbank officer-in-charge Gilda Pico told reporters that the government banks were invited to invest in the proposed OFW Bank and realized the benefits of pooling their resources into one entity focused on serving the interest of migrant Filipino workers.

Alfonso Cruz, Landbank executive vice president, said the likely scheme would be for DBP and Landbank to provide up to 70 percent of the seed capital needed by OFW Bank and split the cost. He said the two banks could pump in P350 million each while Postal Bank would contribute the remaining P300 million out of its existing resources to meet the P1-billion proposed capitalization.

The earlier plan was for the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to shoulder the entire P1 billion, but there were legal questions on such an equity investment. Cruz said the easier scheme would thus be for the government banks to infuse the funds while the Owwa could come in later by subscribing to preferred shares, allowing the agency to benefit from a dividend stream.

The officials said Landbank and DBP would not only provide fresh capital but infuse their

LANDBANK/ B2

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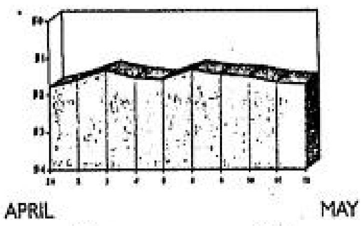

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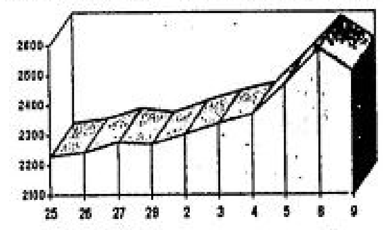

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks down 1.28%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.28-percent lower yesterday as investors took their cue from weaker regional markets after US stocks were dragged down overnight by rising commodity prices, dealers said.

They said the focus remained on mining, commodities and oil exploration-related stocks given the recent bullish performance of those markets.

STOCKS/ B2

REPLACES SGV AS AUDITOR

SMC probes reported overstatement of sales

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP., SOUTHEAST Asia's biggest food and beverage firm, has tapped Laya Mananghaya & Co. as independent external auditor to review its financial books following claims that one of its beverage units had overstated sales.

The allegations, which were contained in an anonymous letter received by San Miguel, has stalled the firm's plan to issue new hybrid securities that have lured as much as $750 million worth of orders from interested investors.

An investigation of these allegations is ongoing.

Laya Mananghaya, which replaced SGV & Co. this year as San Miguel's new external auditor, is an affiliate of global tax, audit and advisory services firm KPMG group.

SGV, which was replaced during the San Miguel stockholders' meeting last Tuesday, has been the company's external auditor since 1997.

San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang said he was also unfazed by reports that Taiwanese bank Chinatrust Commercial Bank Corp. had replaced Laya Mananghaya as its external auditor.

In a previous disclosure to the stock exchange, some members of Chinatrust's audit committee said the change in its external auditor was due to minimal improvement in the auditor's service quality,

SMC PROBES/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Provincial ATM network to be launched next week /B2

BIR directs offices to shore up collection /B10

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Landbank posts 19% jump in 1st quarter profit

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES, THE country's fourth biggest bank, posted a net profit of P908 million in the first quarter or 19 percent higher than a year ago.

"The improvement in our net income is attributed primarily to the increase in revenues from loans and investments, as well as our continuing efforts toward prudent management of expenses," Landbank acting president Gilda Pico said during the bank's quarterly press briefing Thursday night.

She said Landbank was on track with its net profit target of P3.3 billion for this year.

"This is part of our commitment to further improve our financial strength to enable us to finance our ongoing efforts to promote countryside development and generate employment," Pico said.

Landbank has consistently contributed to the national coffers by remitting cash and stock dividends. It also absorbs the administrative cost incurred by the bank in implementing the agrarian reform program using its internally generated income.

Total assets as of end-March amounted to P308.6 billion, 9 percent higher than the P283.1 billion in the same period last year.

Capital likewise went up by 25 percent from P21.9 billion to P27.3 billion in March.

Deposits continued to expand to P236 billion from last year's P215 billion while loans rose to P146 billion from P135 billion over the same period.

Doris C. Dumlao

PRESIDENT Arroyo (right) watches a gas station employee as he fills ethanol blended gasoline on a taxi cab, during the launch of Pilipinas Shell's super unleaded E10 in Manila on Friday. The ethanol blend helps reduce the harmful benzene and sulfur content of gasoline. The government has reduced the taxes on ethanol from 10 percent to 1 percent. AFP

Landbank, DBP eye 70% . . .

From page B1

existing remittance operations into the OFW bank as well and would thus like to exercise management control.

"After studying it, there is really an advantage not only for Landbank but also for the government, since Landbank has been in the remittance business for 10 years. We can also give advantage to the Postal Bank because of the experience of Landbank, plus they also need correspondent banking relationship which they don't have right now," Pico said.

By consolidating their resources, she said the government financial institutions would no longer have to spend individually to take part in the country's $10-billion OFW remittance market.

Cruz said the consolidated entity would also benefit from Postal Bank's expertise.

"They have a distinct advantage because of the postal office system nationwide and the international connection," he said.

But first, the Landbank executives said there must be a due diligence on Postal Bank to make sure that the P300 million in assets being claimed in its books were intact.

"We also want to see the COA (Commission on Audit) report," Pico said.

Last March, Malacañang announced the transformation of Postal Bank into an OFW bank.

Press Secretary and presidential spokesperson Ignacio R. Bunye said: "Given the vital role that OFWs play in strengthening the peso and shoring up international dollar reserves, it is only fitting that they are given access to a bank that will attend to their special needs."

President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted the OFW bank to charge less service fees in handling remittances of Filipino workers abroad.

Owwa, which reported P8 billion in surplus, was also proposed to contribute to the OFW Bank.

The Philippines has eight million workers deployed abroad, of which three million are permanent residents.

SMC probes reported . . .

From page B1

limited exposure in the banking industry of its engagement partner, and an insufficient grasp of new and evolving standards of financial reporting in the banking sector.

"We leave that to them. No (we are not worried). It is an international company," Ang said.

The appointment of Laya Mananghaya as San Miguel's external auditor is part of the company's rotation of external auditors between SGV, its auditor of nine years, PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Laya Mananghaya.

"This is also to ensure transparency and utmost impartiality in the ongoing investigation initiated by the company on allegations of overstatement of sales by one of its subsidiaries," Ferdinand K. Constantino, San Miguel's chief finance officer, said in a separate disclosure.

San Miguel has postponed a proposed hybrid share offer by San Miguel Capital Funding Ltd. after the group received an "anonymous and undated letter alleging overstated sales in one of San Miguel's subsidiaries, Philippine Beverage Partners Inc. (Philbev)."

Constantino said San Miguel's audit committee had initiated an investigation into this and related matters, to be conducted by external, independent accounting and law firms.

The total sales of Philbev was about 2.1 percent of the San Miguel group sales of P227 billion in 2005.

Provincial ATM network to be launched next week

Eyes cooperatives, rural banks as members

By Michelle V. Remo

NATIONLINK, THE COUNTRY'S fourth automated teller machine network, is set to begin operations next week, primarily servicing the untapped markets for banks and cooperatives in the rural areas.

Owned by Nationlink Network Corp., a subsidiary of technology service provider Infoserve, Nationlink said it expected to equal or even surpass the nationwide services reach of existing ATM networks Megalink, Bancnet and Expressnet.

There are so many rural banks and cooperatives in the country in need of ATM services, said Nationlink president and chief executive officer Jess dela Cruz yesterday.

He said Nationlink would not compete with the existing ATM networks, but instead provide complementary services, since it would cater to banks in the countryside.

"Nationlink will allow more Filipinos in the rural areas to enjoy modern electronic banking conveniences," Dela Cruz said, adding that Nationlink would start operations on May 18 in time for the Rural Banking Convention that will be held in Davao City.

He said banks that have already availed themselves of Nationlink's service included Peninsula Bank in General Santos City, Bank of Cebu, Rural Bank of Dapitan in Zamboanga del Norte, Legaspi Savings Bank and Asian Hills Rural Bank in Bukidnon. Cooperatives that will hook up with Nationlink include the Guadalupe cooperative in the province of Cebu and the Perpetual Help cooperative in Tacloban City in Leyte.

Banks and cooperatives are charged P2.5 million for a nationwide ATM connection and P1.5 million for regional. Dela Cruz said that initially, Nationlink was targeting to have 100 ATM machines over the next 12 to 18 months.

He said that Nationlink has already gotten a license to operate from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the company planned to engage in talks for interconnection with the existing ATM networks.

Dela Cruz said that after full operation of Nationlink, the company would bring in additional services such as electronic money remittance through the use of debit cards.

Infoserve, mother firm of Nationlink, has operations in other countries like the United States where it provides debit card services, he added.

The debit card, he said, would benefit families of overseas Filipino workers. OFWs can electronically send money to debit accounts of their families, which can then withdraw funds from their debit accounts through the use of ATM machines.

Dela Cruz said Nationlink has tied up with Diebold, Microsoft, Intel and PLDT to operate the ATM network. PLDT will provide the wireless connection, while Microsoft will provide the software. Intel will supply the required processors, while Diebold will provide the ATMs.

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PUBLIC AUCTION

JUNE 7, 2006 ? WEDNESDAY ? 2:00 PM ? MOLAVE HOTEL, Osmeña St., Tagum City, Davao del Norte

DAVAO DEL NORTE

NEW CORELLA

LOT 1 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 774.00 sqm.
Floor Area 99.00 sqm.
Lot 1090-B-2-C-6-A & 1090-B-2-C-6-B Romualdez Ext.
Minimum Bid Price : 437,250.00

LOT 2 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,000.00 sqm.
Floor Area 102.00 sqm.
Lot 2529 Purok 2 Roxas Ave., Pob-Lacion
Minimum Bid Price 435,000.00

LOT 3 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 338.00 sqm.
Floor Area 69.00 sqm.
Lot 1089-B-5-D-6-E Purok 6, Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 170,400.00

LOT 4 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 794.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2660 Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 53,200.00

LOT 5 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000.00 sqm.
Lot 1918 Magsaysay Ave. Pob.
Minimum Bid Price 64,000.00

LOT 6 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 1,000.00 sqm.
Lot 1863 Magsay Say Ave Purok 5
Minimum Bid Price 64,000.00

LOT 7 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 1,000.00 sqm.
Lot 2112 Fr. Gomez St. Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 48,000.00

LOT 8 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 1,412.00 sqm.
Lots 2292&2291 Bonifacio St Pob.
Minimum Bid Price . 73,500.00

LOT 9 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 1,000.00 sqm.
Lot 1864 Magsaysay Ave. Purok 5
Minimum Bid Price 58,500.00

PANABO

LOT 10 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 300.00 sqm.
Floor Area 217.00 sqm.
Lot B-8-G-1 Gagangohan
Minimum Bid Price 497,250.00

LOT 11 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
Lot 170-C Road Lot Purok 6, Interior, San Francisco
Minimum Bid Price 84,000.00

LOT 12 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 900.00 sqm.
Lot 6226-E Road Lot, Purok 6, San Vicente
Minimum Bid Price 288,000.00

TAGUM CITY

LOT 13 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 769.00 sqm.
Floor Area 90.00 sqm.
Lot 508-D-5 Bermudes Subd., Apokon
Minimum Bid Price 899,100.00

LOT 14 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 418.00 sqm.
Floor Area 174.00 sqm.
Lot 3-C Interior Apokon Road
Minimum Bid Price : 711,750.00

LOT 15 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 1,004.00 sqm.
Floor Area 75.00 sqm.
Lots 4488-D-1 & 4488-D-2 Purok 1 Rizal, Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 384,000.00

LOT 16 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 250.00 sqm.
Floor Area 48.00 sqm.
8441-C-5-D-5-M-1 Purok 3, Durian, San Miguel
Minimum Bid Price 225,000.00

LOT 17 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 1,254.00 sqm.
Lot 387-C-3-C2-F-3, Daneco Rd, Tipaz
Minimum Bid Price . 433,000.00

LOT 18 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 1,302.00 sqm.
Lot 387-C-3-C-7-F-2, Daneco Rd Tipaz
Minimum Bid Price 405,750.00

LOT 19 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 789.00 sqm.
Floor Area 102.00 sqm.
Lot 401-C-2-B-10-A Doctolero Ave., Tipaz
Minimum Bid Price 1,284,000.00

LOT 20 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 108.00 sqm.
Floor Area 180.00 sqm.
Lot 12597-A Damona Ext
Minimum Bid Price 638,750.00

LOT 21 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 344.00 sqm.
Floor Area 133.00 sqm.
Lot 406-G-2-D-3-D-3D-1-A Purok Durian, Seminary Drive
Minimum Bid Price 672,750.00

LOT 22 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 170.00 sqm.
Floor Area 91.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B-2-A Subd Rd. Purok Malinawon, Zafra Subd., Briz District
Minimum Bid Price : 576,000.00

LOT 23 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 209.00 sqm.
Floor Area 59.00 sqm.
Lot 59 Palmera Subd., Km48, Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 313,600.00

LOT 24 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 800.00 sqm.
Floor Area 225.00 sqm.
Lot 488 H-7-E-5-B-2-A, Ganie Road, Pioneer Ave.
Minimum Bid Price : 1,246,500.00

LOT 25 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
Lot 708-8 Manga 1-B, Purok Bayanihan, Visayan Vill
Minimum Bid Price : 525,000.00

LOT 26 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 800.00 sqm.
Floor Area 632.00 sqm.
Lot 708-T-1 Existing Rd. Purok Bayanihan, Visayan Vill
Minimum Bid Price 1,249,000.00

LOT 27 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 450.00 sqm.
Lot 59 Narzel Con-Concepcion Subd Upr La Union, Mankilam
Minimum Bid Price 68,800.00

LOT 28 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,100.00 sqm.
Lot 488-F-4-C-4-B-1 Ganie Road 3
Minimum Bid Price 616,000.00

LOT 29 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 485.00 sqm.
Lot 387-G-15 D. Mencidor Subd., Tipaz
Minimum Bid Price 102,000.00

LOT 30 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 517.00 sqm.
L8 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 103,200.00

LOT 31 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 515.00 sqm.
L9 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 104,000.00

LOT 32 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 513.00 sqm.
L11 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 102,400.00

LOT 33 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 512.00 sqm.
L12 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 102,400.00

LOT 34 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 516.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price . 103,200.00

LOT 35 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 496.00 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St. Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price . 99,200.00

LOT 36 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 1 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St. Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 96,000.00

LOT 37 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 509.00 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 1 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price . 100,000.00

LOT 38 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L10 B2 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 100,000.00

LOT 39 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L3 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 40 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L4 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 41 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 500.00 sqm.
L5 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 100,000.00

LOT 42 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L9 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 100,000.00

LOT 43 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 514.00 sqm.
L10 B2 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 103,200.00

LOT 44 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 514.00 sqm.
L5 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St. Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 94,576.00

LOT 45 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 514.00 sqm.
L6 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 103,200.00

LOT 46 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 516.00 sqm.
L15 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price : 103,200.00

LOT 47 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L6 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 48 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L7 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 49 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 517.00 sqm.
L14 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 95,128.00

LOT 50 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
L8 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 51 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 289.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 10 Purok 09, Narjam Subd., La Filipina
Minimum Bid Price 84,000.00

LOT 52 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 289.00 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 10 Purok 09 Narjum Subd., La Filipina
Minimum Bid Price : 58,400.00

LOT 53 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 1,058.00 sqm.
Lot 28 Blk 4 Purok Liwliwa, Bsco, Cuambogan
Minimum Bid Price 169,600.00

DAVAO DEL SUR

BANSALAN

LOT 54 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 153.50 sqm.
Floor Area 388.00 sqm.
Lot 30-A Blk 6 Viacrucis St.
Minimum Bid Price 1,377,000.00

LOT 55 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 328.00 sqm.
Floor Area 584.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 7 Viacrucis St.
Minimum Bid Price 2,477,700.00

LOT 56 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 387.00 sqm.
Floor Area 163.00 sqm.
Lot 19 Blk 3 Lily St
Minimum Bid Price 976,800.00

LOT 57 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 300.00 sqm.
Floor Area 300.00 sqm.
Lot 9 Blk 8 J P Laurel St
Minimum Bid Price 1,104,000.00

LOT 58 - AGRILAND
Lot Area 10,000.00 sqm.
Lot 6296 A New Clarin
Minimum Bid Price 140,000.00

DAVAO CITY

LOT 59 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 2,747.00 sqm.
Lot 7 Bangkal Talomo
Minimum Bid Price 1,163,740.00

LOT 60 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 10,092.00 sqm.
Lot 945-B Sitio Escuela Bula, Catalunan Grande, Talomo District
Minimum Bid Price . 484,500.00

LOT 61 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 2,000.00 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 3 Ventosa Subd., Bacaca
Minimum Bid Price 330,000.00

LOT 62 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,000.00 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk. 4 Ventosa Subd., Bacaca
Minimum Bid Price : 330,000.00

LOT 63 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 134.00 sqm.
Lot 5 No 83 Buhangin Road, Buhangin Dist
Minimum Bid Price 402,000.00

DIGOS CITY

LOT 64 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 4,940.00 sqm.
Lot 12-G-9-F Subd. Road, Cagape Subd., San Jose
Minimum Bid Price . 1,976,000.00

LOT 65 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 478.00 sqm.
Floor Area 37.00 sqm.
Lot 12613-G-4 Aurora 6th St.
Minimum Bid Price 441,600.00

LOT 66 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 725.00 sqm.
Floor Area 287.00 sqm.
L306 Del Pilar St.
Minimum Bid Price . 1,641,850.00

LOT 67 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 200.00 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 3 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 68 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 197.00 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 3 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price : 31,520.00

LOT 69 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200.00 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 70 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 200.00 sqm.
Lot 7 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 71 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 200.00 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 72 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200.00 sqm.
Lot 9 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 73 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 200.00 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 74 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200.00 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 32,000.00

LOT 75 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 197.00 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 31,520.00

LOT 76 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 197.00 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 4 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 31,520.00

LOT 77 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 222.00 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 5 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 35,520.00

LOT 78 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 210.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 5 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 33,600.00

LOT 79 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 210.00 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 5 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 33,600.00

LOT 80 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 222.00 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 5 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 35,520.00

LOT 81 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 195.00 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 6 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 31,200.00

LOT 82 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 198.00 sqm.
Lot 17 Blk 7 Ruparan
Minimum Bid Price 31,680.00

LOT 83 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 966.00 sqm.
Floor Area 57.00 sqm.
Lot 17-G-9-E-1 Subd Road, Cagape Subd., San Jose
Minimum Bid Price 690,250.00

STA. MARIA

LOT 84 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 1,800.00 sqm.
Floor Area 288.00 sqm.
Lot 7273-F-1 A Lembino Subd., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 1,276,000.00

DAVAO ORIENTAL

BAGANGA

LOT 85 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 190.00 sqm.
Floor Area 267.00 sqm.
Lot 82-C Poblacion Baganga
Minimum Bid Price 796,500.00

BANAYBANAY

LOT 86 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 395.00 sqm.
Floor Area 88.00 sqm.
Lot 2-G-6 Road Lot 2-G-9 Purok 7-A(Molave)
Minimum Bid Price 417,000.00

LOT 87 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 1,039.00 sqm.
Floor Area 153.00 sqm.
Lot No 5 Nat'L Highway Brgy Piso
Minimum Bid Price : 604,000.00

LOT 88 - AGRILAND
Lot Area 9,320.00 sqm.
Lot 11 Purok 5 San Vicente
Minimum Bid Price 130,200.00

CATEEL

LOT 89 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 300.00 sqm.
Floor Area 123.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Lopez Jaena Extn. St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 575,250.00

LUPON

LOT 90 - AGRILAND
Lot Area 5,000.00 sqm.
Lot 7515-B Brgy Ilangay
Minimum Bid Price 650,000.00

LOT 91 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 42,008.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2435-A Brgy Ilangay
Minimum Bid Price 546,000.00

LOT 92 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 207.00 sqm.
Floor Area 90.00 sqm.
Lot 4 No. 0177 Purok Immaculada, Interior Aguinaldo St
Minimum Bid Price : 127,600.00

LOT 93 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 141.00 sqm.
Floor Area 108.00 sqm.
Lot 2007 Aguinaldo St. Baybay
Minimum Bid Price . 593,750.00

LOT 94 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 2,231.00 sqm.
Floor Area 293.00 sqm.
Lot No 1 Comara St. Pob
Minimum Bid Price 1,695,750.00

MANAY

LOT 95 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 790.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 130.00 sqm.
Lot 1579-A Nat'L Highway, San Ignacio
Minimum Bid Price : 174,600.00

LOT 96 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 5,000.00 sqm.
Floor Area 304.00 sqm.
Lot 290-A Nat'L Highway
Minimum Bid Price 1,919,400.00

MATI

LOT 97 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 301.00 sqm.
Floor Area 35.00 sqm.
Lot 5117-A-2 Subd Rd Lamonte Vill. Calagundian
Minimum Bid Price . 146,250.00

LOT 98 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 240.00 sqm.
Floor Area 173.00 sqm.
Lot 18 & 19 Blk 3 Camia St. Don Luis Vill. Madang
Minimum Bid Price 428,350.00

LOT 99 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 600.00 sqm.
Lot 5312-E Interior Lot W/O Rrow Purok Pakakaama, Pahamuleng Roadeo
Minimum Bid Price : 66,000.00

LOT 100 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 378.00 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 2 Road Lot 1 Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price 84,750.00

LOT 101 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 3,821.00 sqm.
Lot D-4-B Interco Driveap
Minimum Bid Price 571,680.00

LOT 102 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 464.00 sqm.
Floor Area 140.00 sqm.
Lot 800-B-2-G-1 Interior Lot W/O Road Right Of Way Interior Dalicot Roadeo
Minimum Bid Price . 184,700.00

LOT 103 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 20,000.00 sqm.
Floor Area 160.00 sqm.
Lot 1-B & Lot 1-D Brgy. Road Upper Kapayas, Don Marlin Marundonan
Minimum Bid Price 996,000.00

LOT 104 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 179.00 sqm.
Floor Area 64.00 sqm.
Lot 3814-I-3 Along Don S Garcia St., Upper Salazar
Minimum Bid Price : 332,100.00

LOT 105 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 2,276.00 sqm.
Floor Area 120.00 sqm.
Lot 3-A-7-B-1 Interior Lot W/O Row Bilanagan, Brgy Don Martin Marunden
Minimum Bid Price : 163,800.00

LOT 106 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 446.00 sqm.
Lot D-7-G Purok Malpinbo-On, Interior Interco Drive Matiao
Minimum Bid Price 80,000.00

LOT 107 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
Lot 5364-E (5424) Alley Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price : 117,000.00

LOT 108 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 500.00 sqm.
Lot 5364-A Alley Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price 117,000.00

LOT 109 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 551.00 sqm.
Lot 5364-H Alley Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price 129,000.00

LOT 110 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 524.00 sqm.
Floor Area 532.00 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 14 Municipal Road, Sto Nino, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 3,805,450.00

LOT 111 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 15,751.00 sqm.
Lot No 464 Lawigan
Minimum Bid Price 75,050.00

LOT 112 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 886.00 sqm.
Lot 2-D-7-I Madang
Minimum Bid Price 355,000.00

LOT 113 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 120.00 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 4 Orchid St., Don Luis Vill., Madang
Minimum Bid Price 57,600.00

LOT 114 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 209.00 sqm.
Lot 2-D-7-D Subd Road, Madang
Minimum Bid Price 83,600.00

LOT 115 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 201.00 sqm.
Lot 2-D-7-F Subd Road, Madang
Minimum Bid Price 80,400.00

LOT 116 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 238.00 sqm.
Lot 2-D-7-G Subd Road, Madang
Minimum Bid Price 95,200.00

LOT 117 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 499.00 sqm.
Lot 1777-D Subd Road, Lower Kapayas, Matiao
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 118 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 560.00 sqm.
Lot 1777-O Brgy Road, Lower Kapayas Matiao
Minimum Bid Price 100,000.00

LOT 119 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 486.00 sqm.
Lot 1777-J Alley Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price 105,000.00

LOT 120 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 2,104.00 sqm.
Lot 4-L-2-I Adjacent To Lopez Vill Subd.
Minimum Bid Price 442,000.00

LOT 121 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 216.00 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 14 Sibala Vill
Minimum Bid Price 43,200.00

LOT 122 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 221.00 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 14 Sibala Vill
Minimum Bid Price 44,000.00

LOT 123 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 223.00 sqm.
Lot 19 Blk 12 Sibala Vill
Minimum Bid Price 45,000.00

LOT 124 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 429.00 sqm.
Lot 1777-H Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price : 99,800.00

LOT 125 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 499.00 sqm.
Lot 1777-G Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayasao
Minimum Bid Price 99,800.00

COMPOSTELA VALLEY

PANTUKAN

LOT 126 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area. 3,761.00 sqm.
Floor Area 126.00 sqm.
Lot 1526-B Purok 5, Pagakpak, Bango-Bong
Minimum Bid Price . 650,250.00

LOT 127 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 334.00 sqm.
Floor Area 106.00 sqm.
Lot 3-B Cabanero St., Kingking
Minimum Bid Price 489,600.00

LOT 128 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 20,000.00 sqm.
Floor Area 229.00 sqm.
Lot 13020-A Purok 2, Provincial Road
Minimum Bid Price 5,433,750.00

MACO

LOT 129 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 173.00 sqm.
Floor Area. 113.00 sqm.
Lot 18 Dao St. Pob
Minimum Bid Price 198,000.00

MONKAYO

LOT 130 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 801.00 sqm.
Lot 1765 Purok 5, Papaya St.
Minimum Bid Price 48,000.00

LOT 131 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 600.00 sqm.
Lot 2375 Judge Cruz St
Minimum Bid Price . 51,200.00

LOT 132 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 800.30 sqm.
Lot 2083 No 071 Glenn Kerr St. Pob
Minimum Bid Price 387,200.00

MONTEVISTA

LOT 133 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 300.00 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price : 19,200.00

LOT 134 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 300.00 sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price : 19,200.00

LOT 135 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 300.00 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price 19,200.00

LOT 136 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 400.00 sqm.
Lot 19 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price 25,600.00

LOT 137 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 400.00 sqm.
Lot 20 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price . 25,600.00

LOT 138 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 400.00 sqm.
Lot 21 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price . 25,600.00

LOT 139 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 400.00 sqm.
Lot 22 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price . 25,600.00

LOT 140 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 400.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 13 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts, Km 100, Linoan
Minimum Bid Price 25,600.00

LOT 141 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area 400.00 sqm.
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Farm agency seeks ₱600-M Japan grant

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FISHery Council (NAFC), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, is seeking a P600-million grant from the Japanese government that would support the country's rice production program.

The grant will be part of Tokyo's Increase in Food Production Program, also known as the KR2 program for developing countries. It will involve a commodity grant in the form of fertilizers, the NAFC said.

The government earlier tapped some P200 million from the KR2 program to promote the extensive use of composting to create organic fertilizers in local farm areas.

This will be the second time the Japanese government is including the Philippines among the KR2 beneficiaries.

For two years, the country was deleted from the list and did not receive agricultural commodities or farm-related inputs such as fertilizers, agricultural chemicals and agricultural machinery from Japan.

Philippine Agriculture Attaché Joseph Sison explained that the Japanese were quite disappointed with the Philippine government's decision to use the proceeds of the KR2 as budgetary support instead of solely for agriculture projects.

He said the Philippine agricultural office in Japan appealed its case to the Japanese Parliament and convinced it that there would be an adverse impact on the supply of cheap fertilizers, particularly ammonium sulfate used in palay production.

Stocks . . .

From page B1

The composite index fell 32.59 points to 2,518.50. It moved between 2,511.96 and 2,555.98 on volume of 3.28 billion shares valued at P2.83 billion. Decliners outnumbered gainers 61 to 47, while 46 stocks were unchanged.

The broader all-shares index fell 15.81 points to 1,560.19.

"Sellers have gotten into the picture," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities Inc. "Apart from the fact that the market is due for a correction following recent sharp gains, the hike in US interest rates also served as a dampener. There are concerns that our central bank may eventually follow suit."

The Federal Reserve lifted key short-term rates for the 16th consecutive time Wednesday and issued a statement that left investors unsure about their outlook for US interest rates and inflation.

AFP

COJUANGCO

Pure Foods posts Q1 net of ₱107M

Revenue up 7% to ₱12.4 billion, operating income jumped 193%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL PURE FOODS INC. HAS posted a net income of P107.4 million in the first quarter, a turnaround from a net loss of P40 million in the same period last year.

SMPFI chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. attributed this to the increases in the sales volume of branded products.

Cojuangco told stockholders yesterday that the company's consolidated revenue rose 7 percent to P12.4 billion in the first quarter from year-ago level.

Operating income also jumped 193 percent to P385 million in the January to March period.

Last year, SMPFI offered 140 new retail and foods service products resulting in a wider choice for consumers.

Earlier, SMPFI reported that its 2005 net income grew 80 percent to P1 billion from P564.7 million in 2004. Last year's performance, it said, was driven by higher sales volumes registered by all businesses, especially the poultry, feeds and flour operations.

SMPFI said it registered a banner performance in 2005 as consolidated revenue grew to P50.4 billion, from year-ago's P45.3 billion. This represented an 11 percent growth over 2004 level.

"The initiatives taken during the year have transformed the character and scope of our company, giving us far-reaching advantages in terms of stability and cohesiveness," Cojuangco said.

Last year's revenue from new businesses—cooking oil, coffee, condiments, ice cream, milk and veterinary medicines—increased by 193 percent from 2004 level. This translated to an additional revenue contribution of P916 million from SMPFI to the San Miguel group's total earnings.

Bankers remain upbeat on PDEX

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANKERS ASSOCIATION of the Philippines has reaffirmed its commitment to fixed income exchange Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX) despite the costly delays in the project implementation.

The Philippine Dealing System Holdings Corp. (PDS group), composed of three operating companies—PDEX, Philippine Depository & Trust Corp. and Philippine Securities Settlement Corp.—held its second annual stockholders meeting on Wednesday, during which the group reported a net loss of P32 million in 2005.

In a press statement, the PDS group said the loss was lower than the projected deficit of P50 million. The losses was attributed to the delays in the implementation of PDEX's programs.

PDTC registered a net income of P26.8 million while PSSC reported a net of P7.2 million. The group's resources reached P496.1 million in 2005 while its capital amounted to P444 million, or lower than P475.3 million in 2004.

Group operating expenses and development cost jumped to P185.6 million from P99.2 million than the previous year.

"This reflected the capacity building and start-up stage of operations, which required the hiring of competent professionals and setting of strict standards for a safe, efficient, and reliable technology infrastructure for the debt market," the group said.

PDEX launched the Fixed-Income Inter-dealer Negotiated Trading System during the first quarter and closed the year with the introduction of the Fixed-Income Inter-dealer Order Driven Platform.

In their letter to shareholders, PDS Group chair Cesar Virata and president Vicente Castillo said the group's 2005 milestones did not come easy, with operations hampered from the start by "heavy resistance from some groups in the market."

They said delays in project implementation resulted in foregone revenues that could have prevented losses.

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Ayala Corp Q1 net profit up 23%

Property arm's income flat at ₱1.175B from ₱1.16B a year ago

AYALA CORP., THE COUNTRY'S largest conglomerate, yesterday announced that its first quarter net profit went up 23 percent, with strong growth in most of its business lines, particularly telcos and water.

In a statement Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala said that the company would be able to sustain the momentum throughout the year, "supported by the positive trends in the broader macro-economic environment."

Ayala, the country's oldest business group with a market value of around P157.896 billion ($3.06 billion), said its net income reached P3.1 billion ($60 million) in January to March from P2.5 billion a year ago.

Analysts polled by Reuters Estimates expect Ayala Corp. to post an average of P6.2 billion in net profit for the whole year, down 24 percent from 2005 when it enjoyed gains from the IPO of Manila Water and asset sales by property subsidiary Ayala Land.

Also, Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) reported its net income in the first quarter was almost flat at P1.175 billion from the P1.16 billion of the previous year, when it acquired net gains of P608 million from the sale of the MRT-3 light rail project.

In March last year the company sold its interests in Astoria Investment Ventures Inc. (AIVI), the holding company for its investment in the MRT-3 project.

"Given robust first quarter sales, we are on track to launch new projects," according to ALI president Jaime Ayala.

Riding on the market upturn, Ayala Land posted revenues of P5.46 billion in the first quarter of 2006.

The bulk of Ayala Land's revenues came from its residential development business, which accounted for 43 percent of earnings, followed by shopping centers with 18 percent, and hotels with 9 percent.

Collectively, support businesses that include construction, property management and waterworks contributed 19 percent to consolidated revenues.

Sales volume of Ayala Land's residential development business grew 31 percent to 894 units in the first quarter. Revenues from residential developments climbed 28 percent to P2.35 billion.

The most impressive revenue growth was registered by Community Innovations at 67 percent to P630 million, following the construction of "Two Serendra" and three towers of "The Columns" on Ayala Avenue.

Ayala Corp. also controls the country's second largest lender Bank of the Philippine Islands, and the second biggest phone firm Globe Telecom Inc. It has interests in electronics, car dealerships and information technology.

Shares of Ayala Corp. rose 12.7 percent in the first quarter, outperforming the main stock index's 4.8-percent gain. *With reports from Elizabeth L. Sanchez, Reuters*

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RIZAL'S GAIN
From left, Spanish Embassy official Jose Miguel Cortez, Manila Water president Antonio T. Aquino, Marivic Aquino of Grupo Seta, and Oscar I. Garcia of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System hold a ceremonial toast after signing an agreement that will provide Manila Water with an P18-million water supply feasibility study grant for the province of Rizal.

PSE net down to ₱54M in 1st quarter

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange (PSE) yesterday reported that its net income fell 25 percent to P54.1 million in the first quarter, from P72.2 million in the same period last year due to higher expenses.

In its financial report, the PSE said operating expenses swelled 22.2 percent to P54.07 million during the January to March period, from P44.2 million last year due to higher occupancy costs, membership development costs from payments for golf activities and higher office expenses.

Compensation and other related staff expenses accounted for 33 percent of total operating expenses, while the rest were from occupancy costs and depreciation.

Although the PSE did not duplicate its record growth in net earnings last year, its first quarter operating revenues slightly grew by 1.3 percent to P111.16 million, from P109.7 million in the same period last year.

PSE's 100-percent owned unit, the Securities Clearing Corp. of the Philippines (SCCP) posted higher service fees after it raised clearing fees by a fraction.

SCCP is a clearing and settlement agency for trades executed in the PSE.

Despite higher service fees, the PSE however registered lower listing fees from initial public offerings.

Only one firm—First Gen Corp. of the Lopez Group—has so far braved a public listing this year. In 2005, two IPOs were conducted.

Membership fees decreased by almost P1 million mainly due to lower transaction fees resulting from lower trading volumes, as compared with last year's average turnover volume.

NTT 2005 profit dips 30% on falling mobile revenue

TOKYO—PROFIT AT NIPPON Telegraph and Telephone plunged 30 percent for the fiscal year that ended on March 31, Japan's top telecommunications company yesterday said.

NTT officials said a sharp drop in revenue from fixed-line telephones and lower prices in mobile services had crimped earnings.

Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp.'s group net profit totaled 498.7 billion yen ($4.5 billion) in fiscal 2005, down from 710.2 billion yen the previous fiscal year.

Fiscal year sales for the Tokyo-based company, which offers fixed-line, mobile and broadband services, totaled 10.74 trillion yen ($96.8 billion), down 0.6 percent from 10.81 trillion yen a year earlier.

Gains that NTT scored in revenue from Internet data transmission were not enough to offset its lagging fixed-line business.

Although NTT's mobile carrier unit, NTT DoCoMo still dominates the Japanese market, prices have been dropping because of intensifying competition.

The Tokyo-based former government monopoly expects 500 billion yen ($4.5 billion) profit on 10.8 trillion yen ($97.4 billion) sales for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007. *AP*

WB flooded with fund requests for ethanol jobs

WASHINGTON—THE WORLD Bank's private sector arm is being deluged with funding requests for ethanol projects around the globe as crude oil prices trade near record highs, an International Finance Corp. official said.

"We've been flooded with requests from lots of countries," IFC's Marcelo Lessa on Thursday said from a cane-ethanol mill in Brazil's Sao Paulo state. "There's some requests from Latin America, we've had several from Africa, and one or two in East Asia."

In the past three years, the IFC has invested $65 million in one ethanol plant in India and another one in Brazil.

Now three more Brazil plant investments, valued at between $35 million to $50 million each for the IFC, are in line for approval as is another $20 million investment in Peru, he added.

"In other countries, the issue of ethanol really accelerated in the second semester of last year, so we have received many proposals," the agribusiness expert said.

Since November, sugar cane project funding requests—largely in the feasibility stage—have come in from the Philippines, Mali, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Mozambique, Tanzania, Egypt and Turkey.

He said inquiries have increased since US President George W. Bush last week called on the US Congress to reconsider tariffs on imports of ethanol, as crude oil prices traded near the mid-$70s per barrel.

"We'll turn several (plans) down because we believe ethanol production has to be competitive with costs [in one country], otherwise you might be hurting that country economically," Lessa said.

Ethanol, an alcohol most often made from grains and sugar cane, is blended with gasoline to reduce tailpipe emissions in cars and trucks. *Reuters*

In Asia, share markets tumble

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARE markets tumbled on Friday as a falling dollar hit exporters such as Toyota, and investors fretted that high oil and commodity prices would dent consumer spending and corporate profits.

The dollar slumped to an eight-month low against the yen and hit one-year lows against the euro and British pound, pummeled by expectations of a pause in Federal Reserve interest rate increases and widening US deficits.

Japan's Nikkei average fell to its lowest close in seven weeks. The slide followed a sharp sell-off in US stocks, which suffered their biggest one-day decline in nearly four months amid fears that rampant oil and metals prices would stoke inflation.

"A fall in US stocks fanned a sell-off here," said Teruhisa Ishikawa, manager at Mizuho Investors Securities' investment information department. "That added to worries over the dollar/yen rate and higher oil prices."

Gold edged down after striking a 26-year high on Thursday, and oil dipped back below $73 a barrel, although it was still not far from its record above $75 reached last month.

In London, financial bookmakers expected the FTSE 100 index to open flat after sinking 41 points on Thursday.

Tokyo's Nikkei slumped 1.5 percent in a downturn analysts said was accelerated by foreign investors' selling. It was its fourth straight day in negative territory—the longest losing streak in more than six months.

MSCI's broadest index of non-Japan Asian shares was 0.9 percent lower by 0610 GMT.

Seoul's benchmark index fell 1.3 percent, Australia's S&P ASX 200 fell 0.7 percent and Taiwan's benchmark index lost 1.1 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.3 percent in the morning session.

The yen has surged more than 7 percent over the past month, prompting Japanese officials to step up warnings on Friday that such strength could hurt the economy's recovery from deflation.

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki said that big currency swings could have adverse effects on corporate profitability.

A weak US currency tends to weigh on the shares of Asian exporters because it makes them less competitive in the United States, a key market, and reduces the value of their dollar-denominated earnings.

In Tokyo, Toyota Motor Corp. fell 2.6 percent and fellow car maker Honda Motor Co. Ltd., which makes around 80 percent of its sales overseas, lost 1.6 percent.

Technology and consumer electronics exporters also suffered, with Sony Corp. down 2.2 percent, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd., the maker of Panasonic goods, falling 2.4 percent and NEC Corp., which posted an 84 percent drop in annual profit on Thursday, losing 4.9 percent.

In Seoul, Hyundai Motor Co. fell 0.8 percent and Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. lost 1.2 percent.

Gold traded around $717 an ounce, after hitting $726 an ounce on Thursday, with traders keen to lock in profits after gains of around 8 percent this week.

NYMEX crude for June delivery was down 58 cents, or around 0.8 percent, at $72.74 a barrel, after jumping more than $1 in the previous session on concern over US gasoline supplies and new threats against foreign oil workers in Nigeria. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 12, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	43,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	37.5	37.5	37	37.5	169,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	70	68	68	1,708,400
China Banking Corp.	905	905	900	900	1,200
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	5,710,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71.5	72	71	72	206,500
International Exch. Bank	39.5	40	39.5	39.5	12,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	43.5	44.5	42	42.5	567,200
Philippine National Bank	37.5	37.5	37	37.5	33,000
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39.5	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	19	19.25	18.75	18.75	105,000
Security Bank Corp.	58	58	57	57	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	47.5	47.5	47	47	12,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	130,000
First Abacus Financial	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	4000	4000	3900	3900	720
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1	1	285,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2140	2130	2130	550
Ivantage Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.2	1.24	7,910,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	51	51	49.5	51	634,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51.5	52	51	52	808,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	94,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21.5	22	21.5	22	1,458,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.7	3,221,000
Petron Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.75	4.85	7,974,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.235	0.25	0.23	0.25	1,870,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.16	1.18	1.12	1.14	907,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	4,000
CADP Group Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	23.75	24.25	231,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	38.5	38.5	37	37.5	489,600
Pancake House Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	35,000
RFM Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.75	130,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.35	3.35	2,799,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	200,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	62.5	64	97,000
San Miguel Corp. B	82	82.5	82	82.5	90,700
Universal Robina Corp.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	964,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	500,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	4,610,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.8	4,288,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.74	1.74	340,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	2,366,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.72	190,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.8	3	2.8	2.8	118,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.12	0.13	37,390,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	2,000,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	3,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	780,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	15,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0085	0.0075	0.0085	19,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	455	455	445	447.5	198,870
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.59	0.52	0.58	1,280,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.6	6.6	6.2	6.5	5,412,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	13,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.4	3.4	6,949,000
APC Group Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.26	0.28	6,740,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.0095	0.009	0.0095	360,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	7,267,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.56	1.32	1.56	507,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.9	1	0.9	1	140,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	10	9.9	10	33,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.26	22,939,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.65	4.8	3,795,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.75	443,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	1,105,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.8	1,029,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	140,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.225	5,690,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	34,009
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.16	30,270,000
SM Investments Corp.	250	250	247	249	64,770
South China Resources Inc.	1	1.16	1	1.14	1,780,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	233,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	10,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	2,500,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.5	14.5	14	14.25	8,199,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	50,000
Belle Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.3	1.34	15,194,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	19,170,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.34	2.36	2.3	2.36	1,905,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	1,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	350,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.67	0.68	48,980,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	30,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	500,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.72	1.72	11,625,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.085	0.085	0.08	0.08	200,000
Interport Res.	0.009	0.01	0.009	0.01	221,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0095	0.01	0.009	0.01	207,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	110,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	380,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.76	1.78	34,245,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	21,090,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	4,770,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.75	12.75	11.75	12.5	947,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	2,460,000
SM Development Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	636,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	4,673,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.115	0.115	5,760,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	17.5	16	17	242,400
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	7,062,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1060	1065	1025	1030	66,780
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.65	3.85	3.65	3.75	21,595,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2120	2145	2110	2135	254,280
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.25	26,510,000
Ionics Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.42	225,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.049	3,800,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.18	1.2	247,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	134,900,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.1	174,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14	13.5	13.75	579,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	60,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	4,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.68	1,801,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	226,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.59	0.6	1,220,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	394,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.75	2.9	2.65	2.85	4,152,000
Paxys Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12.25	917,800
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.3	6.2	5.3	6.2	27,565,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.5	6.4	5.5	6.4	13,459,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.011	0.0095	0.01	561,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	9.3	8.1	9.3	21,170,000
Benguet Corp. A	13.5	14.75	12.75	14.75	606,800
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.3	3.3	2.06	2.55	426,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	68,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.46	28,890,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.027	248,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	111,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	169,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.4	26,346,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.4	21,895,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	30.5	31.5	30.5	31	5,131,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.47	0.49	0.43	0.48	7,810,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	6,280,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.32	0.33	9,770,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.013	361,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	158,800,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.6	1.82	1.6	1.72	19,842,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.6	1.82	1.6	1.76	8,336,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	17.75	18.5	16.25	16.5	2,457,900
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	5,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	16	18	16	17.75	1,140,800

CURRENCIES

May 12, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.778695	1.000000	51.6040
Japan	Yen	0.007043	0.009044	0.4667
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466205	1.882900	97.1652
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100443	0.128989	6.6563
Switzerland	Franc	0.641958	0.824402	42.5424
Canada	Dollar	0.706491	0.907276	46.8191
Singapore	Dollar	0.497124	0.638407	32.9444
Australia	Dollar	0.604952	0.776880	40.0901
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.065614	2.652661	136.8879
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207647	0.266660	13.7607
Brunei	Dollar	0.495542	0.636375	32.8395
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000115	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.020642	0.026508	1.3679
UAE	Dirham	0.212034	0.272294	14.0515
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.284200	66.2699
ArgentinaPeso	0.256571	0.329489	17.0030	
Brazil	Real	0.373295	0.479386	24.7382
Denmark	Kroner	0.134110	0.172224	8.8874
India	Rupee	0.017351	0.022282	1.1498
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217513	0.279330	14.4145
Mexico	New Peso	0.071522	0.091848	4.7397
New Zealand	Dollar	0.491352	0.630994	32.5618
South Africa	Rand	0.128944	0.165590	8.5451
Korea	Won	0.000832	0.001069	0.0552
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024760	0.031797	1.6409

Call center school focuses on training 'near hires'

By Daxim L. Lucas

A CEBU-BASED CALL center school is focusing its efforts on training applicants who were rejected by call center operators to boost their chances of being accepted when they reapply.

In a press statement, ExcelAsia said it was now accepting so-called "near hires" as students at its Cebu and soon to be opened Makati City campuses.

Near-hires are applicants who were not accepted by call center companies because they lacked certain skills.

"Call centers are now sending their near-hires to ExcelAsia for further training and to improve their performance during the job screening," the company said.

The hiring rate in the call center industry is between 2 percent and 5 percent. This means that for every 100 applicants, only two to five persons are hired.

Applicants between the 6-percent and 10-percent passing rates are considered "near-hires," the company explained.

"I believe the new trend for the call centers is to outsource most of their English, culture and customer service training," ExcelAsia president Rita Trillo-Ugarte said.

"It's cheaper and it takes up less call center space. It is also more beneficial to them because ExcelAsia only focuses on training."

Aside from near-hires and call center employees, the company said that many corporations were sending their employees for English and customer service training.

The company is also hoping to benefit from the President Macapagal- Arroyo's recent decision to donate P500 million in scholarships through PGMA Training for Work Scholarships Project.

Under the scheme, 100,000 full and partial scholarships will be awarded to persons willing to undergo training for the business process outsourcing industry that includes call centers.

High school graduates, employed but ready for a career change and underemployed or unemployed individuals may qualify for the program.

To date, ExcelAsia has trained and retrained over 4,000 call center applicants since it started operations in August 2005.

The company trains over 100 applicants a week in Cebu. It expects to train up to 500 applicants a week once its Makati office opens.

Bankers

From page B3

the fixed income exchange. It's our baby," BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel said in a recent interview.

"Moving forward with a strong commitment from shareholders, particularly the BAP, PDS Group has lined up several major launches within 2006," the group announced.

The Fixed-Income Public Order Driven Trading System, which will open the platform to participation by institutional investors, is planned for the second semester of 2006.

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Adventure GLX Diesel	763,000	66,450	31,739	22,618	18,100	15,582
Adventure GLS Sport Gas M/T	830,000	84,500	34,526	24,604	19,690	16,950
Adventure GLS Sport Gas A/T	883,000	112,450	36,731	26,175	20,947	18,032
Adventure GLS Sport Diesel (7&8 seater)	830,000	79,500	34,526	24,604	19,690	16,950
Adventure Super Sport Diesel Std.	871,000	120,650	36,231	25,820	20,662	17,787

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415,000	**34,583**	**23,056**	18,445	13,145	10,519	9,055
441,500	37,833	25,894	20,674	14,733	11,790	10,150
415,000	**34,583**	**23,056**	**17,292**	12,978	10,386	8,941
435,500	38,174	26,127	20,847	14,856	11,889	10,234

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

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'Ampalaya' gaining worldwide acceptance

By Charles E. Buban

THINK OF THIS wrinkly green vegetable with a distinctive bitter taste as nature's way of bringing hope to the more than 171 million diabetics worldwide.

Ampalaya (bitter gourd), according to Lito Abelarde, president of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines Inc., has a long history of use not only as a food but also as a hypoglycemic agent (one that lowers blood glucose levels).

"It is only now that modern science is beginning to investigate the plant's many medicinal uses," he said.

Beneficial to business

Abelarde said this development would benefit the country's slowly growing *ampalaya*-based food supplements business.

"Taking supplements of or eating *ampalaya* is gaining significant acceptance not only here but elsewhere in the world," said Abelardo.

Next week, Frank Murray, an American health and nutrition book author, will be in the country to promote his latest book "Ampalaya: Nature's Remedy for Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes."

Murray traveled to the Philippines in 2005 to research on *ampalaya* and how it helped diabetics. Abelarde said the book contains case studies from the Philippines, Europe and the United States.

Abelarde believes the appeal of *ampalaya* is being aided by a market that has considered alternative medicine as a hope for the desperate or as a necessity when drug prices keep rising.

"More and more people are looking for an alternative or a complementary method of addressing diseases, including diabetes, because they want something less invasive and gives no or little side effect," said Abelarde.

He said Murray's findings could convince more scientists and researchers to take *ampalaya* more seriously and help shed light on the vegetable's medicinal properties that until now have not yet been scientifically verified.

Abelarde said that so far, scientists have accumulated "sufficient evidence" that the unripe fruit and seeds of the *ampalaya* possess hypoglycemic potency, improve glucose tolerance and enhance the effects of insulin and hypoglycemic drugs.

Free board review from doctors' group

By Tessa R. Salazar

A TOTAL 450 MEDICAL GRADUATES from various medical schools and hospitals will gather on May 27 for a half-day board review and career training seminar.

Unlike other organized medical board reviews, the lectures, the Medicine BlueBook and even the snacks in this seminar will be for free.

The expenses will be shouldered by the nonprofit group Movement of Idealistic and Nationalistic Doctors (MIND) and their supporters.

Dr. Willie T. Ong, MIND president, said lecture topics include how to pass the board exams, how to get ahead in medicine, how to decides one's area of specialization and techniques in starting a practice.

Dr. Enrico Banzuela, author of the Philippine Medical Board Reviewer, will conduct the review. Dr. Jose Sabili, president of the Philippine Medical Association, will give an inspirational talk and hold an open forum with participants. Doctors June Rosales of the Ilo-ilo Doctors Hospital and Philip Cruz of the UP-PGH will give inspirational talks.

MIND, which seeks to inspire fresh graduates and medical students to find their niche in the Philippines, can be reached at the website http://mind.pinoy.md.

ASK THE DENTIST
Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Another cleaning?

I JUST HAD MY TEETH CLEANED, but my dentist said I needed another cleaning soon. Shouldn't I get a cleaning only after every six months?—Nonoy F.

The interval varies from patient to patient. Some need their teeth cleaned more often than others, depending on the amount of tartar produced. Some might be diagnosed with moderate or severe gum problems so the interval is shortened.

It's possible that you produce more tartar than normal or maybe you skipped going to the dentist every six months and now have to catch up with more cleaning sessions.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

The receptor that binds

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

LAST OCTOBER, THE NOBEL Prize for Physiology or Medicine went to two Australian doctors—Barry Marshall and J. Robin Warren—for discovering, the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* and its role in gastritis and peptic ulcer disease. It was bestowed more than two decades after the researchers first hypothesized that bacteria, rather than physical factors such as stress, were to blame for ulcers.

While attempting to prove his theory to skeptics, Marshall, who went on to found a lab in Australia dedicated to *H. pylori* research, once actually swallowed a culture of the bacterium. He developed gastritis, and, more importantly, recovered after the bacteria were eradicated.

Since Marshall and Warren's discovery, many researchers have concentrated on finding and understanding the hows, whats and wheres associated with *H. pylori*. Researchers estimate that up to half of the world's population could be infected with the bacteria, some from childhood, although not all get sick from it.

It is known to cause chronic inflammation of the stomach lining, and the location of the inflammation can make other sections of the stomach more susceptible to duodenal and gastric ulcers. It has also been associated with an increased risk of stomach cancer.

New study

In a recent paper, researchers from the Vanderbilt School of Medicine led by Richard Peek Jr. identified a receptor that aids the bacteria in binding to, and thus affecting, the stomach lining. The paper was published online last March 16 and appeared in the May 12 print edition of the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

For *H. pylori* to affect the stomach lining, it has to first bind to the gastric epithelial cells. Researchers found that about 20 percent of this bacterial population does so in its hosts.

Many toxic organisms such as *E.coli* use a protein called decay-accelerating factor (DAF) to bind themselves to the host cells. Other studies noted that more DAF was present in human stomach tissue infected with *H. pylori* bacteria and in gastric cancer lesions. Based on this information, Peek et al. hypothesized that *H. pylori* was yet another bacterial toxin that uses DAF as a receptor to bind the bacteria to the stomach lining cells.

For their study, Peek et al. infected wild type and Daf1 knockout mice with *H. pylori*. Then they measured the bacterial amounts bound to the host cells and found that greater amounts of *H. pylori* were bound to the gastric lining cells when DAF was present compared to when DAF was removed.

A second experiment demonstrated that the quantities of other toxigenic strains such as *E.coli* were not affected by the presence or absence of DAF, thus proving that the DAF-related response was specifically related to *H. pylori*.

The pharmaceutical implications of this finding could be significant. Current ulcer treatments involve taking a number of medications over several days. This could be reduced now that the new data suggest that blocking DAF's interaction with the bacteria would lead to reduced stomach lining inflammations. With fewer inflammatory episodes, disease like ulcers and stomach cancers might be treated or prevented.

* * *

The 8th paragraph of last week's column should have read: In this year's January issue of the American Journal of Pathology, Osterhaus et al. further note that the "H5N1 virus infection causes systemic disease and spreads by potentially novel routes without and between mammalian hosts."

Effective weight reduction

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

THE BIG PARADOX IN DEVELOPING countries like ours is that we see a lot of starving and undernourished people, but we have an equal number of overweight individuals.

Overweight people generally get tired more easily than those who are not because of the extra baggage of fats they carry. Being 25 lbs overweight is like carrying a 2-year-old child all day.

It is not only tiring but the extra stress on the heart and circulatory system can have disastrous consequences.

Thus, weight reduction has become big business in many countries. We see the proliferation of weight-reducing clinics run by unscrupulous healthcare professionals who prescribe an overdose of weight-reducing pills, unmindful of the long-term consequences to their patients.

Newspapers and magazines carry all sorts of advice on slimming that at times conflict with each other.

Spot a phony

Experts agree that the best way to maintain weight loss is to follow a healthy lifestyle consisting of the right diet and exercise. Any weight-reducing "expert" who advises you that you can eat anything you want and exercise just when you want to is certainly a phony.

Weight reduction is a challenge, but if one has a strong will to lose weight, it shouldn't be a big problem. A regimen that promises a weight loss of 50 pounds in one month is not medically sound and is likely to cause more harm than good. An ideal weight-reducing program makes you lose weight gradually, but consistently.

Weight loss of one to two pounds a week is just about ideal. If you lose weight any faster than this, you will lose muscle, too.

How do you know if you're overweight? If you have a waist circumference more than 32 inches (for women) and more than 36 inches (for men), chances are that you have some excess poundage to lose.

Body mass index

Doctors and dieticians usually compute for body mass index (BMI), which is obtained by measuring the weight in kilograms and the height in meters. BMI is weight divided by height squared. Filipinos and Asians should have a BMI of 22-23. If your BMI is more than 25, you are already overweight.

Every weight-reducing diet requires that the amount of calories eaten should be less than the amount of calories used up. The total amount of food, especially fatty food should be cut down, and daily activity and exercise should be increased.

A reducing diet should not make you starve. You just have to be conscious of what you eat. Small frequent feedings will quell the hanger pangs and prevent binge eating.

Meals and snacks must be low-fat, and preferably high in fiber.

Throw away your frying pan, and try grilling, baking, poaching, boiling or microwaving food instead.

Buy lean cuts of red meat and limit portion sizes to 4 to 6 oz. Roast poultry or meat on a rack to drain the fat. Remove the skin from poultry before cooking. Avoid whole-cream milk. Eat low-fat yoghurt instead of cream, cottage cheese instead of regular cheese, and low-fat spreads instead of butter.

Make sure you have 5-6 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Have fruits for snack. Limit but don't extremely cut down on carbohydrates. A cup of rice, a potato, or two slices of bread are good energy sources. Fill your plate with fish, lean meat and vegetables, not fatty protein foods. Drink 10-12 glasses of water daily.

Weight reduction is not a one-size-fits-all regimen, and should thus be individualized. A diet that works for some people may not work for others. You have to find the program that best suits you.

But whatever approach you try, the key to long-term success is a slow steady weight loss. Weight experts will tell you that the most successful diets are usually the ones that make small permanent changes to your normal eating habits. Fad diets may in the short term promote weight loss, but after a few weeks they become dull and unacceptable, causing old eating habits to return.

Weird Nobels, real math

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THE Nobel prizes, but what about the Ig Nobels? These awards started in 1991 when science magazine editor Marc Abrahams began recognizing scientific work that "cannot or should not" be reproduced. With around 5,000 nominations yearly, the Ig Nobels are awarded in medicine, physics, chemistry, biology and peace, with secrecy perhaps as great as that in Stockholm.

The first winner was Prof. Bernard Vonnegut who in 1975 studied chicken plucking as a measure of tornado wind speed. Other Ig Nobels studied the effect of music on suicide, necrophilia in the mallard duck, the use of magnets to raise up frogs, the psychological defense of farting, and for peace, Japanese inventor Daisuke Inoue, for his karaoke invention (which makes people "learn to tolerate each other").

Winners are informed beforehand and are given a chance to turn down the prize, but surprisingly, few do so. The ceremonies are held at Harvard, with the audience peppering the stage with paper planes. Real Nobel prize winners present the awards to their Ig counterparts. I thank my colleague, Dr. Norman Quimpo, for sending me an article on the Ig Nobels, which can be found at http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/59BA7BD9-5ABA-43CC-B0AD-711264D5486F.htm.

Young Japanese

Now for real science. Believe it or not, powerhouse Japan is worried about its youth's declining test scores! In a 2004 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development involving 41 countries, Japanese children slipped in their ability to read and understand prose passages and diagrams.

Why? First, children excessively used mobile phones and Net chatrooms to communicate, both of which tend to ignore grammatical rules. Second, the Education Ministry introduced a liberal (criticized by many educators as "easier") curriculum in 2002. Third, more students are no longer studying at home. Fourth, children are not reading enough books. Fifth, teachers have been criticized for lack of quality.

Sound familiar? The Japanese government has been working overtime to make sure that such declines are reversed.

Understanding statistics

Knowing math can save lives. For instance, suppose a depressed patient read that the chances were 70 percent that she would respond to a certain antidepressant. So 70 percent of the time, the patient would feel better, right?

Not really. A better understanding of the figures would mean that if 10 people with depression were prescribed the drug, then seven would be expected to get better. But the statistics came from a large sample, and did not necessarily apply to individuals. Thus, the patient would either improve with the treatment or not, notwithstanding the statistics she heard about.

Confused? Harvard statistician Dr. Judith Singer put it this way: "The number of possible outcomes—in her case either responding or not responding to an antidepressant—has nothing to do with the actual probability of either outcome happening.

"For example, either a woman is pregnant or not. She can't be a little pregnant. But that doesn't mean that she has a 50 percent probability of being pregnant. A woman who takes a fertility pill may stand a much higher chance of actually getting pregnant than if she goes without it."

To help children understand math better, I recommend this nifty interactive dictionary website www.teachers.ash.org.au/jeather/maths/dictionary.html.

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Surf stages Mother's Day concert fit for queens

SURF HIGHLIGHTS THE FESTIVE month of May with a precedent-setting grand tribute to mothers on May 13 for the culmination of its Mother's Day campaign. The first ever Reyna de Mayo Concert stages a larger than life experience of crowning mothers as Reyna ng Gintong Sandali.

Last March, Surf launched Nay Ur D Best: Parangal sa mga Reyna ng Gintong Sandali calling on families, most especially the kids to honor their mothers as Reyna ng Gintong Sandali. The Mother's Day campaign was brought to life in Homeboy, where real life 'gintong sandali' stories were featured on the show and magnified through a raffle promo giving away family vacation packages and a house and lot.

On the eve of Mother's Day, Surf is set to transform the CCP grounds fronting Roxas Boulevard with regal trappings of a golden concert and coronation night. Surf Reyna de Mayo is poised to render this year's biggest and most heartfelt celebration in honor of moms.

"Mothers are extremely close to the heart of Surf. The unparalleled care and love of a mom deserves no less than a grand tribute which here family can experience together. That's why Surf brings to her the first ever Reyna de Mayo Gintong Harana Concert," said Darlene Chiong, marketing manager for Unilever home care.

The star-studded concert will be hosted by Boy Abunda and Tintin Bersola-Babao. To set the tone of the tribute concert, the program shall open with the St. Vincent Academy Pangkat Makata and an onstage parade of several celebrity and non-celebrity mothers deemed as Queens of Golden Moments, mirroring the Filipino tradition of parading queens in Flores de Mayo.

Surf
Nay Ur D Best
Parangal sa mga Reyna ng Gintong Sandali

Lending this event a bit of glamour and entertainment are equally admirable celebrity moms such as Donna Cruz, Yayo Aguila-Martinez, Maricel Morales and Dawn Zulueta. Surf moms shall be serenaded by top balladeers Dingdong Avanzado, Luke Mejares and Ariel Rivera as well as popular bands like Cueshe and Rivermaya.

The much awaited grand raffle draw for the furnished Camella Homes house and lot worth P2 million will also be the highlight of the evening. "This would be one golden moment for a very lucky mother," said Stephanie Lim, assistant brand manager for Surf. "It brings great joy to us to help realize a dream of many mothers. A lucky mom can now be a queen in her new home. Also watch out for a heartwarming finale led by the Surf twins and Lumen that brings together mothers from many walks of life and crowning them mga Reyna ng Gintong Sandali!"

Witness a beautiful orchestration of gratitude to mothers with Surf Reyna de Mayo Gintong Harana Concert. Hope to see you all on May 13, 6 p.m. at the CCP Grounds, Roxas Boulevard. Because Surf believes that "Nay Ur D Best" - you deserve a golden tribute.

Fra Lippo Lippi concert

CATCH THE PHILIPPINE TOUR OF FRA LIPPO LIPpi's lead vocal Per Sorensen and fall in love all over again. Fra Lippo Lippi is originally a duo composed of Sorensen and Rune Kristofferson. Sorensen is the voice you'll hear on all Fra Lippo Lippi hits. He will have his concerts at the Araneta Coliseum on May 13, 8 p.m.; Lahug Pacific Grand Ballroom, Waterfront Hotel, Cebu City, on May 15, 8 p.m.; Central Bank Auditorium, Davao City, on May 17, 8 p.m. and The Atrium, Limketkai Mall, Cagayan de Oro City, May 20, 8 p.m. In the concerts, Sorensen will perform Fra Lippo Lippi's chart toppers as well as some new compositions. Get your tickets for the Araneta concert at Ticketnet found at all SM branches.

Philfoodex Buyers Night

THE PHILIPPINE FOOD PROCESSORS AND EXporters Organization Inc (Philfoodex) will sponsor a Buyers' Night on May 13, 7 p.m. at The Skyline restaurant, Mezzanine area, World Trade Center, Pasay City exclusively for its members. This is in connection with the May 12-14, International Food Exhibition Philippines (Ifex), also at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. The buyers' night is pursuant to Philfoodex's objective to assist its members in aspiring for global competitiveness and excellence. For more information, members may call Isabel or Norman at the Philfoodex Secretariat at (632)634-3304 or (632)634-3466.

LSQC '82 Homecoming

LOURDES SCHOOL OF QUEZON CITY (LSQC) HIGH School Batch '82 launched their silver anniversary campaign during turnover ceremonies that capped the annual alumni homecoming held recently at the LSQC Grade School grounds in Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City. Batch '82 president George Escarraga called on all alumni to support the socio-civic events and programs lined-up during their anniversary year that will culminate in the February 2007 homecoming celebration dubbed "Rewind: Blast From The Past." For more details on these upcoming events, please log on to www.lsqc82.org.

Bits Clips

UP Film Institute workshop

THE UP FILM INSTITUTE, in cooperation with Kodak and Sony Phils is launching its' first Cinematography for Digital Filmmaking Workshop on May 29 to June 3. The first-of-its-kind workshop specifically designed for indie filmmakers to focus on the basic principles of cinematography as applied and practiced in digital filmmaking. The resource person for the 6-day workshop will be director of photography Louie Quirino, cinematographer and digital colorist for a number of recent digital features and a graduate of the Los Angeles Film School. Interested parties may call 926-3640, 926-2722 or e-mail bjorki71@yahoo.com for registration.

UP sorority gears for gold

THE UP PHI DELTA ALPHA SORORITY IS GEARING up for its Grand Golden Anniversary celebration in 2007. Alumnae and resident members are organizing regular gatherings and batch visits to drum up the excitement of the grand event. Vicky Paguirigan-Evaretta (Batch '65) hosted the first meeting of the organizing committee attended by the new set of officers and alumnae sisters. For inquiries, please contact present LC Karen Pagsolingan at 0917-8565616 or ofc. no. 633-5336; AY 98-99 LC Claire Algarme at 0917-8228638; or e-mail upphideltaalpha@yahoo.com.

Crisp training programs

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INVITATION TO BID

The Social Security System is inviting offers to purchase by way of sealed bids the following properties:

ITEM NO.	LOCATION OF PROPERTY	DESCRIPTION	SELLING PRICE
ANTIPOLO CITY			
1.	Lot 41, Block 2, Shooting Star St., Antipolo Hills, Bo. San Luis, Antipolo City	124 sq m. TCT No. R-16700 w/ 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	P207,100.00
2.	Lot 12 Block 20 Ilang, Ilang Street Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	150 sq m. TCT No R-29327 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	356,700.00
3.	Lot 20 Block 1 Magnolia Street, Antipolo Hills Subdivision, Antipolo City	120 sq m. TCT No. R-35170 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	427,100.00
4.	Lot 4 Block 8 Narcisus Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m. TCT No R- 28507 2BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	374,400.00
5.	Lot 24 Block 57, Avocado Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No. R-35172 2 BR & 1 T&B poor condition Bungalow	302,700.00
6.	Lot 23, Block 12, Kim Street, Piedra Blanca Subdivision, San Isidro, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT 249212 w/ unfinished bungalow	249,500.00
7.	Lot 8 Block 6 Magnolia Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m. TCT No R-35169 2BR & 1 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	292,900.00
8.	Lot 17 Block 6, Dama De Noche Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No B-28506 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	287,900.00
9.	Lot 5 Block 9 Kalachuchi Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	150 sq m. TCT No R-28319 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	344,800.00
10.	Lot 6 Block 1 Maguey Road, Our Lady of Fatima Village, San Isidro, Antipolo City	216 sq m TCT No R-29322 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	611,300.00
11.	Lot 27 Block 10 Dama De Noche Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No 30320 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	448,300.00
12.	Lot 23 Block 24 Azucena Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No 26508 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	302,300.00
13	Lot 3 Block 20 Jasmin Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	150 sq m. TCT No R-35171 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	347,000.00
14	lot 37 Block 2 Shooting Star Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No R-29328 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	354,500.00
15.	Lot 3 Block 22 Natalia Avenue Antipolo Hills Subdivision, Antipolo City	238 sq m TCT No R-29328 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	640,200.00
16	Lot 6 Block 12 Rosal Street, Antipolo Hills Subdivision, Antipolo City	120 sq m TCT No R-16495 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	348,700.00
17.	# 37 Lot 32 Block 2 Phase 5 Hazelton Street, Vista Verde Country Homes Mayamot, Antipolo City	198 sq m. TCT No R-35108 2BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	890,300.00
18	Lot 17, Block 20, Jasmin Street, Antipolo Hills, San Luis, Antipolo City	150 sq m TCT No. R-15480 w/ 2BR & 1T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	328,000.00
19.	Lot 23 Block 57 Atis Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	123 sq m TCT No R-29331 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	273,100.00
20	Lot 5 Block 2 Amapola Street, Antipolo Hills, Antipolo City	172 sq m TCT No. R-28505 2 BR & 1 T&B Detriorated Bungalow	406,100.00
21	Lot 10 Block 19 Harrison Drive Cor Mc Kinley Street, Broadway, Pines, Antipolo City	118 sq m. TCT No R-20185 3 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	573,200.00
22	lot 3 Block 27 Street Homes Subdivision, San Luis Antipolo City	195 sq m TCT No R-29321 3 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	608,600.00
BULACAN			
23	Lot 12, Block 13, San Felipe, Subd., Mojon, Malolos, Bulacan	264 sq m. TCT No T-127038 Lot only	580,800.00
24.	Lot 7, Block 13, St. Lorraine Subdivision, Tabang, Guiguinto, Bulacan	205 sqm TCT No T-122220 cannibalized bungalow	512,000.00
25.	Lot 8 Block 5 No 255 Jasmin Street, Liliesville II Subdivision, Lawa, Meycauayan Bulacan	180 sq m TCT No 388046 2 BR & 1 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	612,800.00
26	Lot 2 Block 2 221 Pinecone Street, Pineville Subdivision, Lawa, Meycauayan, Bulacan	205 sq m TCT No 388045(m) 2 BR & 1 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	846,500.00
27	L2076-H Tugalog Street, Bo. Parada, Sta. Maria, Bulacan	500 sq m TCT No T- 300740 (M) Abandoned & cannibalized bungalow	816,000.00
CALOOCAN CITY			
28	Lot 14 Block 72 Suplungan Street, Amparo Subdivision, Caloocan City	400 sq m TCT No C-369782 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	758,800.00
29.	Lot 8 Block 17 Rose Street, Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Caloocan City	88 sq m TCT No C-379437 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	396,600.00
30	Lot 36 Block 3 Villa Magdalena III, Camarin Road, Caloocan City	84 sq m TCT No C-375319 no BR & no T&B Bungalow	511,200.00
31	Lot 22 Block 3 Villa Magdalena III Camarin, Novaliches, Caloocan City	88 sq m TCT No C-377200 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	424,200.00
32.	Lot 26-A # 022 Anahaw Street, Amparo Subdivision, Novaliches, Caloocan City	237 sq m. TCT No C-375755 Deteriorated Residential Bungalow	456,800.00
33.	Lot 5 Block 5 Sampaguita Street, Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Caloocan City	91 sq m. TCT No C-378412 2BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	382,000.00
34.	Lot 14 Block 18 Rose Street, Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Caloocan City	86 sq m. TCT No. C-378691 2BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	377,300.00
35.	Lot 5 Block 3 Lucky Homes, Deparo, Novaliches, Caloocan City	150 sq m TCT No. C-373552 3 BR & 2 T&B fairly Maintained Bungalow	709,200.00
36.	Lot 5, Block 11, Sagrado Village, Deparo, Caloocan City	100 sq m. TCT No C-362245 2 BR & 1T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	452,300.00
37.	Lot 12 Block 17 Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Novaliches, Caloocan City	86 sq m TCT No 374207 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	434,300.00
38.	Lot 10 Block 18 St. Rose Street, Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Caloocan City	86 sq.m. TCT No. C-374346 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	433,800.00
39.	Lot 900-M-2-D, Sunflower Street, Capitol Parkhomes, Novaliches, Caloocan City	100 sq m. TCT # C-378782 Abandoned	274,200.00
40.	Lot 4 Block 3 Villa Magdalena III, Camarin, Novaliches, Caloocan City	86 sq m. TCT No C-378411 2 BR & 1 T& B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	451,700.00
QUEZON CITY			
41.	Lot # 594-T-5-L-10 # 13 Molave Drive I, Damong Malit, Novaliches, Q.C.	400 sq m. TCT No 299930 7 BR & 2 T&B Deteriorated 2 Unit Split-level Bungalow	1,116,000.00
MALABON CITY			
42.	Lot 15 Block 3 Saint James Village, Tinajeros, Malabon City	181 sq m. TCT No. M-32581 (Shanties)	362,000.00
43.	Lot 1-D-1 # 213 Interior M. Sioson Street, Dampalit, Malabon City	299 sq m. TCT No M-32582 No House	598,000.00
MUNTINLUPA CITY			
44	Lot 21 Block 1-C Diamond Park, Victoria Homes Subd., Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	300 sq m TCT No. 177412 2BR and 1T&B poorly maintained	928,000.00
45.	L272-B-7-A Interior San Guillermo Street, Putatan, Muntinlupa City	255 sq m. TCT 7945 abandoned/ cannibalized bungalow	346,400.00
46	Lot 29 Phase 6-A Pearl Heights, Victoria Homes, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	154 sq m TCT # R-15724 2BR & 1T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	545,700.00
47	Lot 2 Block 5-H Jade Heights, Victoria Homes Subdivision, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	270 sq m. TCT No 15323 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	764,800.00
48	Lot 1 Block 6-A Pearl Heights, Victoria Homes, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	150 sq m TCT No 15438 2 BR & 1T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	529,500.00
49	Lot 12 Block 4-O Cherry Street, Sapphire Hills, Victoria Homes, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	240 sq m TCT No 14178 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	661,000.00
50.	Lot 35 Block 5-J Handel Street, Jade Heights, Victoria Homes Subdivision, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	240 sq m. TCT No 15437 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	732,600.00
51.	L272-B-7-B San Guillermo St., (Interior) Putatan, Muntinlupa City	200 sq m TCT No. 187574 w/ 2BR and 1T&B abandoned bungalow	256,900.00
52	Lot 8 Block 2-K Emerald Hills, Victoria Homes, Muntinlupa City	146 sq m TCT No 15327 2 BR & 1 T&B Poor Condition Bungalow	438,200.00
53	Lot 32 Blk 5-J, Jade Heights, Victoria Homes Subdivision, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	240 sq m TCT No 11064 2BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	690,900.00
54	Lot 47 B5-C, Jade Heights, VHS, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	240sq m TCT 9883 2BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	676,400.00
55.	Lot 6 Block 4 Lakeview Subd., Muntinlupa City	148 sq m TCT No 15360 lot only	444,000.00
PARAÑAQUE CITY			
56	Lot 3 San Roque Street, San Agustin Village, Parañaque City	256 sq m TCT No 181731 3 BR & 2 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	825,100.00
57.	Lot 5-A Block 17 Waling Waling Street corner Rosas Street, United Parañaque Subd., IV, Brgy. Marcelo, Parañaque City	150 sq m TCT No. 165169 3 BR & 1T&B Well Maintained Bungalow	1,231,110.00
RIZAL			
58.	Lot 9 Block 13 No 774 Tagon Street, Meralco Housing, Darangan, Binangonan, Rizal	325 sq m TCT No B-281 1 BR & 1 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	1,046,300.00
59	Lot 32 Block 15 Downhill Street, Towerhills Phase I, Dolores, Taytay, Rizal	120 sq m TCT No 694034 2BR & 2 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow converted into duplex	612,700.00
60	Lot 20 Block 6 Palmera Homes II, Dolores, Taytay, Rizal	108 sq m TCT No 694035 Abandoned / Cannibalized Bungalow	736,500.00
61	Lot 19 Santol Street, Dividend Homes Phase I, San Juan, Taytay, Rizal	120 sq m TCT No 694036 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	357,500.00
62	Lot 4 Block 1 Athen Street, Greeland Newtown, San Mateo, Rizal	200 sq m TCT # 459487 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	620,900.00
63.	L 18, B 10, # 731 J-Cotton Street, Meralco Housing Darangan, Binangonan, Rizal	302 sq.m TCT No M-115317 1BR & 1T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	1,001,900.00
64.	(#106)Apple Street, L1C-10-A-8 Espiritu Compound, Manggahan, Montalban, Rizal	178 sq m TCT# 459465 2BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	517,900.00
65.	No 47 J Espina St., Palomo Lake Subd., Kalayaan, Angono, Rizal	566 sqm TCT No. 594771 & 594772 Lot Only	905,600.00
66	Lot # 434 J P. Rizal Avenue Bo Samploc, Tanay, Rizal	260 sqm TCT No M-80951 2 BR & 2 T&B unfinised construction Bungalow	385,000.00
67.	L16-B, Sto. Ursula Village, Calumpang, Binangonan Rizal	120 sq.m TCT No M-37118 w/ 1T&B poorly maintained single unit	278,100.00
68	L12 B1 # 27 Mabolo Street, Torres, Compound, Poblacion, Montalban, Rizal	180 sq m TCT No 461025 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained One Storey Duplex	726,900.00
VALENZUELA CITY			
69.	Lot 8-B-2 2413 B Francisco Street, Fortune Village I, Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City	120 sq m. TCT No V-77495 3 BR & 2 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	561,000.00
70.	Lot 1210-B-6-F # 94 Gumamela Duplex Compound, Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City	193 sq m TCT No. V-77878 4 BR & 2 T&B poorly Maintained Bungalow	830,900.00
71.	Lot 1 Kabesang Imo Street, Marpaz Subdivision, Balagkas, Valenzuela City	194 sq m TCT No. V-77479 No BR & No T&B Abandoned Bungalow	503,200.00
72.	Lot 430-M-3-B O Fernando St., Mc Arthur Highway, Malanday, Valenzuela City	290 sq m TCT No V-77442 2 BR & 1 T&B Deteriorated Bungalow	805,300.00
73.	L1-C 6171 El Grande Homes, Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City	128 sq m. TCT No V-75207 2 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	467,200.00
74	Lot 411-C-2-C-4 Ilang-Ilang St. Veinte Reales, Tugatog, Valenzuela City	123 sq m. TCT V-65875 2BR and 1T&B bungalow, fairly maintained	348,700.00
75.	Lot 6-B-4, P. Salazar Street, Caloong II, Valenzuela City	171 sq m TCT No V-70535 3 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	574,300.00
76.	No 2250 St. Peter Street, New Prodon Subdivision Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City	120 sq m. TCT No V-77474 3 BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	495,600.00
77.	Lot 291-A-2-B # 72 Lopez Compound, Vicente Reales, Dalandanan, Valenzuela City	120 sq m. TCT No V-77498 4 BR & 2 T&B Poorly Maintianed Bungalow	464,600.00
78	Lot 1-1 Dr. J. Santiago Subd., Malanday, Valenzuela City	230 sq m TCT No V-77512 no BR & no T&B Cannibalized Bungalow	730,250.00
79	# 202 Pearl Street, Sta Lucia Village V, Punturin, Valenzuela City	150 sq m. TCT No V-69444 2BR & 1 T&B Fairly Maintained Bungalow	616,100.00
80.	Lot 1406-D, La Mesa Street, Benilo Homes, Ugong, Valenzuela City	120 sq m. TCT No. V-69457 w/ 4 BR & 2 T&B Poorly Maintained Duplex	586,700.00
CAVITE			
81.	Lot 28, Block 3, Peru Street, Sunshine Homes, Phase 3, GMA, Cavite	180 sq m TCT T-937865 2BR and 1T&B poorly maintained bungalow	509,800.00
82	Lot 34, Blk 3, Sunshine Homes, GMA, Cavite	180 sq m. TCT No T-1032002 2 BR & 1 T&B Poorly Maintained Bungalow	514,800.00

Complete description of the properties including Bidding Forms and Instructions to Bidders are available at the Real Estate Department, 5th Floor SSS Bldg., East Avenue, Quezon City. Please contact **MS. ROSE FERNANDEZ** at Telephone Nos. 920-64-01 local nos 5123 & 5125.

Sealed bids should be dropped inside the Bid Box located at the Real Estate Department, 5th Floor SSS Bldg., East Avenue, Quezon City, from 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. on 30 May 2006. The bids should be labeled Acquired Assets Disposal Committee, Social Security System.

Bidder's deposit, equivalent to at least 30% (if bidder is former owner, their spouses, parents and children) or 10% (if bidder does not fall on the preceding category) of the bid price in cash (Philippine money/ U.S. dollar) or in Certified Manager's Check in favor of SSS, must be enclosed with a sealed envelope. Any other form of draft purportedly as manner of payment is not acceptable. The bidder must also sign the sealed envelope accross its flap. A sealed bid without the bidder's bond will not be entertained.

The award shall be made to the bidder who makes the most advantageous offer to the SSS. As a rule, cash bids shall be preferred over installment bids. An installment bid shall, however, be considered more advantageous if the installment bid is greater by at least 20% over a cash bid. In case of installment bids, the bid with the shortest payment period shall be preferred unless the difference in the bids is greater by at least 20%. In which case the bid with the longer payment period shall be considered more advantageous to the SSS.

The sale of the properties shall be "As Is, Where Is" The winning bidder shall undertake the responsibility to acquire and maintain peaceful possession and enjoyment of the property without seeking the assistance of the SSS.

After deducting the bid deposit from the Bid Price, the balance shall be payable either in cash within 30 days upon approval of the sale or amortized up to a maximum of 120 months at a pre-determined interest rate. If the bidder opts to amortize, proof of income (ITR, business permit or Certificate of Employment and Compensation) shall be among the documents for submission on the bidding date. Upon approval of the sale, the buyer shall issue twelve (12) PDCs covering the first year of amortization and the same number of checks for each succeeding year until fully paid. Actual expenses or advances made by SSS for foreclosure and consolidation of title shall be added to purchase price if the buyer is the former owner or his successor-in-interest provided the fair market value is less than the consolidated value of the property.

The system reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to waive any defect found therein.

All awards shall be subject to the confirmation of the Social Security Commission whose decision shall be final and binding on all concerned

AVP MARIANO PABLO S. TOLENTINO
Chairperson, Acquired Assets Disposal Committee

(PDI - MAY 13 2006)

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Email: makati:citygardenhotels.com

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15 Kisad Road, Baguio City
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www.shangri-la.com

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'A Day for Moms' at Dusit Hotel

Happy Mother's Day

MOTHER'S DAY IS TRULY "A DAY FOR moms" at Dusit Hotel Nikko with its sumptuous food offerings specially prepared by its Asian specialty restaurants to celebrate this important occasion.

May 13 and 14, is a special day for all mothers at The Café. A special buffet spread is created to delight the special ladies of our lives on Mother's Day and is priced at only P950++ per person. Benjarong Royal Thai Restaurant treat mommies with its Mother's Day set menu specially created by its Thai chef and is priced at only P880++ per person. For a taste of authentic Japanese cuisine, Benkay celebrates Mother's Day and offers a special set menu with a myriad of Japanese dishes consisting of seven items that includes chef Tomiyama's very own Japanese sweets. Avail of this sumptuous fare for only P1,300++ per person. At Thien Duong Vietnamese Cuisine, try chef Nguyen's two set menus specially created for Mother's Day and is priced at P800++ per person only.

Diners availing of the special buffet of The Café or the set menu offerings of Benjarong, Thien Duong, and Benkay oh May 13 and 14, awards mommies with a "Mom's Essentials" kit. The perfect gift to the best moms, it contains fabulous beauty and wellness products from Lancome, Rustan's Essenses, Belo Medical Group, gift vouchers for a free personalized make-up consultation from Lancome, Mommy Academy gift certificates from Big & Small Co., Maxibear and FOOD magazine.

For inquiries and dining reservations, call 867-3333.

Ancient healing practices with Bellevue Spa Club's Hilot Massage

A PRACTICE HANDED DOWN FROM MANY generations, the hilot is an effective healing ritual addressing both the physical and spiritual aspects. This traditional treatment is now available for everyone to enjoy at The Bellevue Hotel's Spa Club. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., the Spa Club also offers 24-hour in-room massage services. A combination of Eastern and Western treatments can be availed from highly-trained therapists. Modern facilities, expert trainers and experienced stylists can also be found at the gym and salon to complete your transformation.

Experience the fun, frolic and food of the Filipino fiesta with The Bellevue Hotel's Lucban Fiesta Buffet this May 26 to 28. The dining Mecca of the Alabang area takes you to the land of kipings, longganisa and espasol with a buffet spread which features most-loved dishes of this locale and all-time Filipino favorites. Enjoy the fiesta frenzy at The Bellevue! For inquiries, call 771-8181.

Treats for mom at Waterfront

THIS SUNDAY, WATERFRONT CEBU CITY Hotel & Casino (WCCHC) honors the most important woman in our lives -- mom. On May 14, celebrate Mother's Day with the whole family with a Holy Mass to be held at the Hotel's Celebes Room, 10:45 a.m. More treats await mom at the Waterfront. Lavish mom with a gastronomic feast at Uno with the Mother's Day Buffet Special. Lunch and dinner buffet at P750 per person plus a special token for mom to bring home. Tribute mamma with a culinary trip at the Hotel's signature Italian restaurant, La Gondola where romantic lunch and dinner set menus also await.

Mother's Day happens only once a year. There's no occasion more special than this to celebrate, show mom how great she is or just simply to thank her.

For inquiries and reservations, you may call (032) 232-6888 loc. 8200 or 8201 or Manila Sales and Reservations Office at (02) 687-0888. You can also visit the website at www.waterfronthotels.net.

Sunday champagne lunch at Paseo Uno

MANDARIN ORIENTAL'S Asian-inspired chic, all-day dining restaurant Paseo Uno with its theatre of open kitchens and sensational buffets, has created a gustatory trademark among the metropolis' stylish set when it opened three years ago and introduced a trendsetting dining concept.

Beginning May 21 and every Sunday thereafter, another grand dining experience awaits Paseo Uno diners and habitués. A glass or free-flowing servings of Moet et Chandon's Brut Imperial can be enjoyed while partaking lunch at Paseo Uno. Savouring a sumptuous lunch has never been made more exciting and luxuriously affordable with a lavish treat of International and Asian specialities, which consist of a superb array of cold hors d'oeuvre, appetizers, salads, sweets and cheeses; live cooking stations which include Asian noodles, pasta, tempura, dim sums, grill, roasts and crêpes, all prepared a la minute and perfectly complemented by the ultimate bubbly!

The splendid buffet lunch inclusive of Moet et Chandon Brut Imperial is priced at P1,499+++, single serving; and at P1,999+++, free-flowing. Children's buffet (5 to 12 years old) is priced at P650+++, inclusive of free-flowing soft drinks or chilled juices.

On Fridays, the restaurant's "Seafood Night" proffers the day's freshest bounty from the sea in a variety of gastronomic offerings from its award-winning culinary team.

Paseo Uno is open from 5 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., breakfast; 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., lunch; 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., snack; and 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., dinner. For reservations and enquiries, call Paseo Uno at 750 8888 extension 2411 / 2412.

Mom's free at Seasons at The Manila Pavilion Hotel

IT'S MOTHER'S DAY! TREAT your mom out this 14th of May to Manila Pavilion Hotel's newly opened coffee shop, Seasons.

Seasons honors all mothers on this special day by preparing a lunch and dinner buffet fit for the "Queen of our Hearts". Choose among an array of international recipes prepared with the same tender loving care and cooked to perfection right before your very eyes.

Buffet is priced at P850+++ per person. And as a special treat, mom dining with 3 more guests eats free.

For inquiries and reservations, please call Manila Pavilion Hotel at (02) 526-1212 extension 2318.

DAVAO TOURISM SUPPORTS WOFEX 2006

World Food Expo 2006 (Wofex), the 6th International Exposition on Worldwide Food & Beverages slated on August 2 to 5, at the World Trade Center, Manila, Philippines goes full blast in its roadshow campaign in the Visayas down Mindanao regions.

Being the biggest food exhibition in the country today, Wofex is tagged as the ultimate food show experience with over 700 exhibitors and an expected trade visitors of over 45,000 in its 4-day run. Organized by Premier Events Plus Group Inc (PEPGroup), this year's WOFEX promises to bring in new technologies, new products and services from here and abroad. Wofex 2006 is supported by the Davao Tourism Association (Data), the organization responsible for all tourism activities of the region with hotels, restaurants, resorts, clubs and similar establishments under their umbrella. In photo during the sealing of the agreement in Davao City, from left, Art Boncato (president of Data), Joel Pascual, president of PEPGroup. For more information on Wofex, call 929-7993, 436-4209, 435-4790, 920-8136, or e-mail info@PEPGroup., or log on to www.wofex.com.

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PPMC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	: PROCUREMENT OF MATERIALS FOR THE AIRPORT PERIMETER FENCING PROJECT
Location	: SAN FERNANDO AIRPORT, CANAOAY, SAN FERNANDO CITY, LA UNION
Brief Description	: TO SUPPLY, DELIVER MATERIALS FOR THE SAN FERNANDO AIRPORT FENCE
Approved Budget For the Contract (ABC)	: P 2,602,868.80
Contract Duration	: Thirty (30) Calendar Days
Delivery Period	: Thirty (30) Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar contract within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the above ABC. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 19-22, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference/Site Inspection	May 23, 2006
3. Opening of Bids	June 5, 2006; 9:00 a.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	June 5, 2006
5. Post-qualification	June 6 - 7, 2006
6. Notice of Award	June 15, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to the PPMC Cashier.

PPMC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Vice President & CEO

(PDI-May 6 & 13, 2006)

TransCo

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

Section I.

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply and Delivery of Various Information and Communication Technology Equipment
(Reference No.: PB060425-EA0072)

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board*, intends to apply the sum of *Php 7,785,000.00* being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Various Information and Communication Technology Equipment.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from Eligible Bidders for *Various ICTs*. Delivery of the GOODS is required *within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders, starting **May 15, 2006 to June 5, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (PhP 1,000.00).* The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **May 22, 2006 at 3:00 P.M.** at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **10:00 A.M. of June 6, 2006.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	1% of ABC
2. Bank guarantee	1.5% of ABC
3. Surety bond	2.5% of ABC
4. Foreign government guarantee	100% of ABC

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on **June 6, 2006 / 10:00 A.M.** at the *Admin Conference Rm. same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812237 / Fax No. (632) 9228432 • 9213479
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 13, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Rizal St., Batangas City

EXTENDED NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the Batangas State University formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the **BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY** is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Mr. Richard Albert I. Osmond.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Filipino citizen;
- Preferably a holder of a doctoral degree;
- Preferably 35 to 60 years old;
- Must be morally upright;
- With Recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry;
- With at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants should make a full disclosure of all administrative, criminal, and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines against him/her and are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation
- Sandiganbayan
- Civil Service Commission and/or Certificate of No Pending Administrative Case issued by the Administrative Officer of present employer
- Previous Employer
- Not convicted in any administrative or criminal cases

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed CV and certified supporting documents
- Proposed vision, Mission and Thrusts of the University
- Results of neuro-psychiatric examination conducted by any government physician or any accredited health institution
- Medical Certificate from a government physician

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit four (4) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before May 31, 2006 to:

MR. MARLON N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
Office of Commissioner S. M. OCAMPO, JR.
CHED, 5/F, DAP Bldg., San Miguel Ave.,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY
c/o MS. ROSE MAGSINO
Batangas State University
Rizal St., Batangas City
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(PDI - May 13, 14 & 15, 2006)

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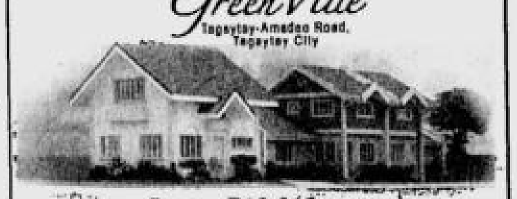

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REBUSTILLO – RITO REUNION

THE FAMILY OF SOCORRO REMPIS VDA DE REBUSTILLO WILL HOST THIS year'S Rebustillo – Rito Clan whole day reunion on Saturday, May 13, 2006 at Lola Coring's residence, 157 Ilaor Sur, Oas, Albay. Family members are requested to contact Marie Lynn Reyeg (0917 7627282); Ma. Socorro S. Jungoy (02) 8129166 and Romeo 'Jhun' Rebustillo (0919 5552632).

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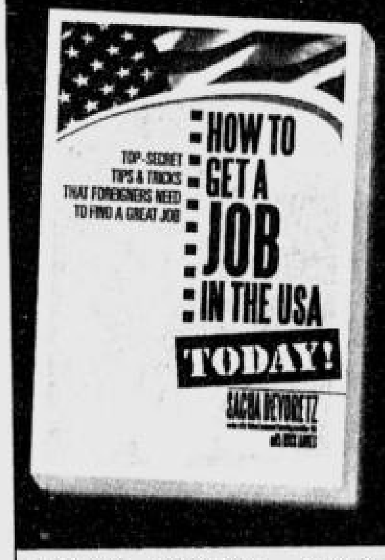
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OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

TERESA PIA ROQUE RISKIN

Peacefully joined our LORD & her husband
JACK RISKIN
on May 11, 2006 at the age of 42.

Her children **NATHANIEL, ZACHARY & NAOMI**; parents **ROMEO ROQUE & TERESITA DACUDAO ROQUE**; sisters & spouses **MICHELLE & JAY MANZO, EMILY ROQUE, CAROL & DEL MAGHIRANG**; mother-in-law **BEVERLY GOLDBERG** & sister in law **CINDY RISKIN**; other friends & relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

The remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati.

Details for the interment will be announced later.

Mark Brian Palou

February 25, 1953 – May 11, 2006

His loving wife **Gigi**; daughters, **Lisette & Margie**; brothers & sisters **Hecky & Bernice Syquia, Ricky & Joy Palou, Arthur & Lea Palou, Paul & Sandra Schwartzbaum, Boopsie & Val Eraña, Raffy & Rose Policarpio**, nephews & nieces, relatives and friends request you to join in celebrating Mark's coming home to the Lord.

His remains are at the Sanctuario de San Antonio, Capilla de San Francisco, Forbes Park, Makati City.

The funeral mass will be held on Sunday, May 14, 2006 at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Bantay Bata Foundation or the Bantay Kalikasan Foundation will be greatly appreciated.

Our Dearly Beloved

NEMECIA ESTACIO REONISTO

Peacefully joined our Creator
on May 11, 2006 at the age of 80.

Her loving children **Kokoy** & **Monica**, **Nonie** & **Eric**, **Danny** (†) & **Empy**; grandchildren **Palma**, **Año** & **Joshua**; in-laws, relatives and friends give thanks to God for the blessing of her life.

A Mass will be held on Sunday, May 14, 2006
at 6:00 P.M. at the St. James the Great Church,
Cuenca Street, Ayala Alabang Village,
Muntinlupa City.

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"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

Erlinda Baclagon Cruz, M.D.

Joined her Creator
on May 9, 2006.

Her children **Aquilina, Drs. Federico & Sonia, Drs. Ofelia & Felix Antonio, Drs. Erlinda & Roberto Climaco**; grandchildren **Carmina, F. Gregorio (†), Dr. Kariktan, Christiaan, John, Jamielynn, F. Matthew, A. Alexandra Cruz, Von & Michael Antonio** request the pious reader to pray for her eternal rest. She lies in state at the residence of **Dr. & Mrs. Federico Cruz** at 8 Milan St., San Francisco Village, Taytay, Rizal.

Interment at the Taytay Catholic Cemetery will follow the 8:00 a.m. Mass on May 14, 2006.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

CARMEN MARIÑO PEREZ

wish to sincerely thank everyone
who showed their love and affection
for Mameng through their presence,
prayer, thoughts and flowers.

More Classified Ads on pages A6 & B7

BUSINESS

BIR directs offices to shore up collection

Revenue agency falling short of P79-B target for April

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue has directed its regional offices to implement all tax-audit schemes available, such as surveillance of suspected tax cheats, to meet its P675.35 billion target for the year.

The directive came amid the BIR's struggle to meet its revenue collection targets.

As of April 29, the revenue agency was still about P10 billion short of its P79-billion target for the month, putting at risk the government's ability to reduce its budget deficit this year.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said in a statement that he has instructed the revenue agency's regional directors to implement programs like "industry benchmarking," "tax mapping," third-party information gathering, and even surveillance of possible tax evaders to shore up revenue collections.

Under the benchmarking system, the BIR will come up with a benchmark on the average income of firms in an industry.

Taxpayers who declare an income lower than the benchmark would become candidates for tighter auditing.

"If the taxpayer refuses to rectify their tax payment, the same may be classified as priority for surveillance and full blast audit," Buñag said in the statement.

Surveillance would include evaluation of a firm's inventory and day-to-day operations.

Tax mapping, meanwhile, is a program where revenue personnel are sent to check on the tax compliance of business establishments.

The level of tax compliance is determined through proper issuance of receipts and keeping of books of accounts.

The BIR likewise uses third-party information, such as payments made by clients, to determine the accuracy of income declared by taxpayers subjected to audit.

Being the national government's biggest source of revenue, the BIR is hard pressed to meet its revenue collection target to bring down the budget deficit to P125 billion this year.

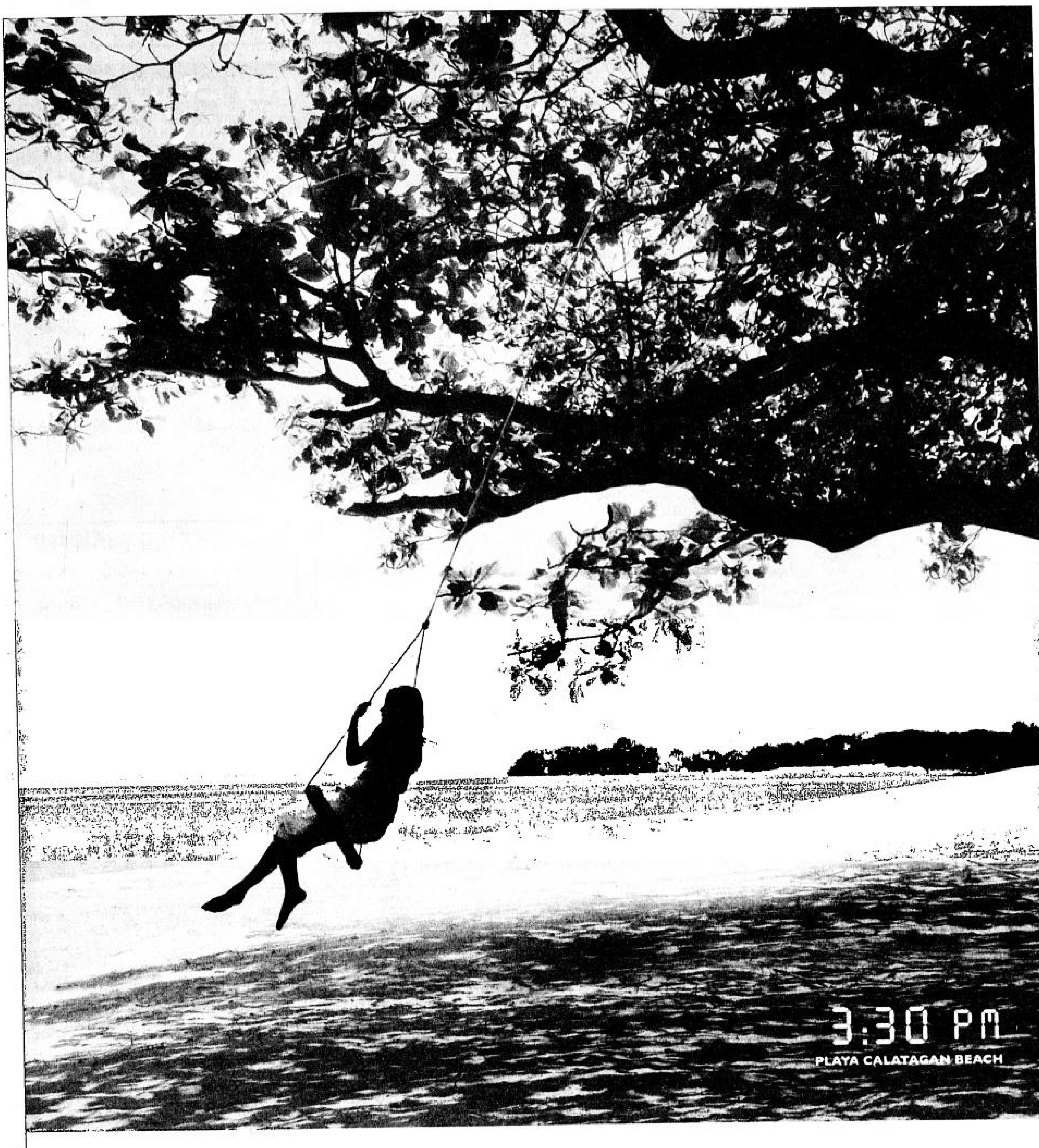
The deficit stood at P146.8 billion last year.

The BIR is even more pressured to meet its target by the government's decision to spend more for pump-priming activities.

Under the initiative, the government intends to maximize the entire national budget and spend more on infrastructure to boost the economy.

Fiscal authorities said the pump-priming initiative, particularly through implementing infrastructure development projects, would mean government spending would be heavier in the first months of the year to take advantage of the dry season.

Some analysts have expressed concern on the frontloading of expenditures, saying this threatens the government's ability to meet its fiscal targets.



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Software firms urged to be more inventive

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOCAL SOFTWARE INDUSTRY SHOULD step up efforts to come up with more innovative products to more effectively compete with its Asian neighbors in the international market.

Philippine Software Industry Association (PSIA) president Fermin Taruc said the Philippines had long positioned itself in the international software market as a low-cost software provider.

"But the emergence of China and Vietnam necessitates building more sustainable competitive advantages, including quality and domain expertise," he said.

Domain expertise, in particular, could be developed by encouraging private sector multinational firms to set up software innovation centers in the country to help local software companies come up with better wares, he said.

He added that support from the government was also very important.

Another way for local software firms to become more competitive was to focus on sectors where international demand was huge, such as mobile and gaming applications, he said.

"There's a huge demand for such applications in Japan, Europe and the US," he said.

Right now, he said around 75 percent of software revenue came from services, with actual products contributing only 25 percent.

"We want to increase that by 25 percent by developing more innovative products," he said.

Although hard-pressed to further boost the quality of local software and come out with more new products, he said there was little or even no pressure at all on local software firms to become certified as they mostly targeted smaller clients abroad.

First Gen prods gov't on Calaca

EVEN AFTER HAVING GONE THROUGH TWO failed biddings for the 600-megawatt (MW) Calaca coal-fired power plant, First Gen Corp. remains interested in the asset and would want to get into discussions with the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) regarding its acquisition.

In an interview with reporters, First Gen vice chair and chief executive Peter Garrucho said the independent power producer had already made its intentions known to PSALM in a letter.

But he said the government agency, which had been tasked to privatize the National Power Corp.'s assets, would have to decide whether it would go into negotiations with parties interested in the asset, not necessarily just First Gen.

Asked whether it was possible for First Gen to form a partnership with DMCI Holdings Inc., the only other bidder for the Calaca plant, he said it was still too early to tell.

However, he admitted that DMCI could play a vital role in Calaca as it was a coal supplier.

"But, of course, there may be other potential partners that can bring some other things to the table. Although we are willing to do it alone, and we can do it alone," he said.

He related that First Gen had the funds to acquire the plant even without a partner, as well as the technology to run the plant alone.

Also, he said the IPP had already identified which of its people would be assigned to the plant if ever the acquisition pushes through.

"We even have people who have already worked there. We're familiar with the asset," he said.

Asked whether First Gen would be willing to raise its bid to meet PSALM's $288-million reserve price for the generation facility, he did not give a categorical answer, saying only that he believed the company's bid of $176.6 million was quite reasonable.

He explained that should First Gen succeed in acquiring the plant, it would have to spend a "considerable amount" to rehabilitate the plant, to ensure that there would not be any environmental concerns, particularly from the facility's host community. *Abigail L. Ho*

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

PROPERTY

Green architecture and visual pollution

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

WE'VE ALL HEARD WHAT IS AIR pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, noise pollution, electropollution and industrial pollution. And now we have visual pollution? Is there such a thing?

Visual pollution or visual blight refers to those elements of the landscape that the people find unattractive. These elements that clutter our surroundings may include excessive advertising billboards, stoplights, street signs, dangling telephone and power lines, utility posts, street furniture, graffiti, weeds, garbage, badly maintained buildings and derelict vehicles along the side of the road.

What is dangerous about visual pollution is its subtle way of making people indifferent to its negative effects. For example, the features of landscapes in many of our communities are getting to be identical and generic no matter what part of the country you visit, fast-food stores, roadside commercial establishments, etc. The unique character of our cities, towns and barrios, which evolved through its history and culture, is slowly disappearing, all because we have allowed visual pollution to dominate and damage our environment.

Other effects

Visual pollution can also refer to visibility issues such as when a distant scenic view is blocked by an unattractive element in the landscape.

Graffiti, spray-painted names and messages are a form of urban visual blight. This type of vandalism and its eradication in cities and towns can cost a lot of taxpayers' money. We can see this in the cleaning program of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) as it tries to cover up graffiti all over the city with decorative painted murals. One may not agree with the art form but it's definitely better than the graffiti we see everywhere.

Visual pollution also affects the tourism industry. Tourists, both local and foreign, avoid unattractive places. They associate such places as unsafe and unhygienic. Establishments in these areas naturally will have very few patrons.

Visual pollution, just like the clutter and disorder in our homes, can also cause stress. Add to this the hectic pace and pressures of modern life in our crowded cities and you develop stressful citizens.

How other countries cope

The Philippines is not alone in this predicament. Many countries now are advocating and fighting visual pollution on many fronts and many of them are waging an effective war.

For instance, Beijing has approved new regulations to eliminate illegal outdoor advertising. The new regulation also asks government organizations to submit their advertisements for approval. Illegal ads are demolished if they are not given permits. Companies and persons who refuse to comply are fined up to US$1,200. Work has also started on the demolition of old billboards.

Beijing has also set up rules establishing specific sites where billboards can be placed. Outdoor signs are forbidden near the Tian'anmen Square and other important government buildings.

The new regulation also forbids billboards and other ads at interchanges and overpasses.

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, they have an ordinance that limits the size of signs through a formula that considers the size of the lots, the amount of frontage on the street and the size of the building. Allowable sizes for signs range from one square foot in residential areas to a maximum of 706 square feet. The height of the sign is limited to 26 feet or the height of the average utility pole. Sign size allotments are given to the property owner rather than to individual businesses.

When the ordinance was passed, all the sign owners were given five years to alter the size of the signs to conform with the law. When the provisions of the law were challenged by sign companies, the New Mexico court ruled that esthetics alone was enough reason for the regulation and that the ordinance did not violate the sign owners' constitutional rights. Since then most sign owners have complied with the ordinance.

In historic parts of the city, signs have been put up to conform with the architectural character of the structures. Stoplights and street lights have also been designed to complement the historic character of their settings. Utility poles have been removed in the downtown area and in newer areas utility lines have been laid underground.

In England, as in many parts of Europe, people agree that advertising can be done in various ways and business is not determined by the size and number of signs.

In the Czech Republic, due to the rapid increase in neon signs and illuminated advertising since the fall of communism, a law was enacted to curb another form of visual pollution, light pollution.

Light pollution is illumination from artificial light dispersed outside the areas it is supposed to brighten, especially if facing skyward. Opponents of light pollution claim that due to the proliferation of artificial outdoor lighting, it has become difficult to have clear night skies where one can see the stars.

Astronomers also complain that they need to use stronger instruments to view the Milky Way.

Astronomers will work with energy experts and the public to limit the amount of wasted light. This means billboards lit from above with lights pointing downward. Astronomers claim that excessive exposure to nighttime lighting causes nearsightedness, cancer, insomnia, immune-system damage and a reduction in production of the hormone melatonin.

What to do?

As seen from the experience of several countries, there are many strategies that can be used to combat visual pollution. A sensitive approach would be for planners to include the elimination of visual pollution in their design criteria. An example would be to bury utility lines in some specific areas, like parks and plazas. This would lead to more green and esthetically pleasing neighborhoods. Cell site towers can be designed to look like trees or cacti.

Another suggestion is for people who feel that some billboards pollute their neighborhood. They should let the advertisers know that they will not be buying their product as long as they continue to pollute the landscape. This is more effective than regulation, especially in this country, where we already have a lot of laws that are not followed.

Green architecture can address some of the problems of visual blight. Green buildings encourage the use of materials that last longer and are easy to maintain. They are also healthy buildings that promote the use of daylight and natural ventilation, elements that are discarded in favor of obstacles that prevent access to open and green spaces. Green architecture encourages the integration of lush vegetation as part of the overall onsite development of a property. This means no unnecessary structures such as ad signs to block the flow of ventilation.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.

VISUAL pollution has caused cities and towns to look identical and generic no matter what part of the country you visit. The unique character of our cities and towns, which evolved through its history and culture, is slowly disappearing, all because we have allowed visual pollution to dominate and damage our environment. TREEHUGGER: THE DUNN FOUNDATION

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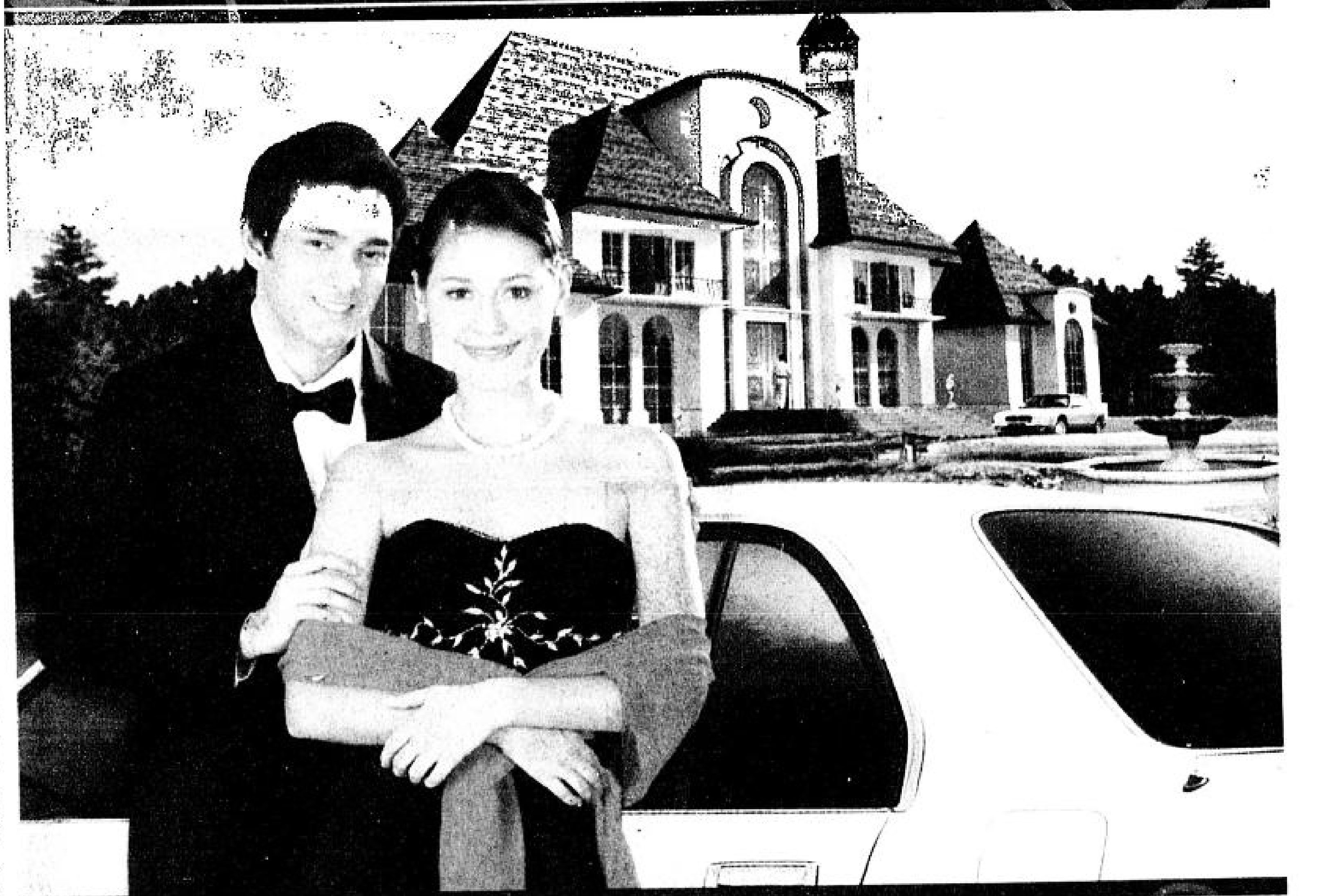

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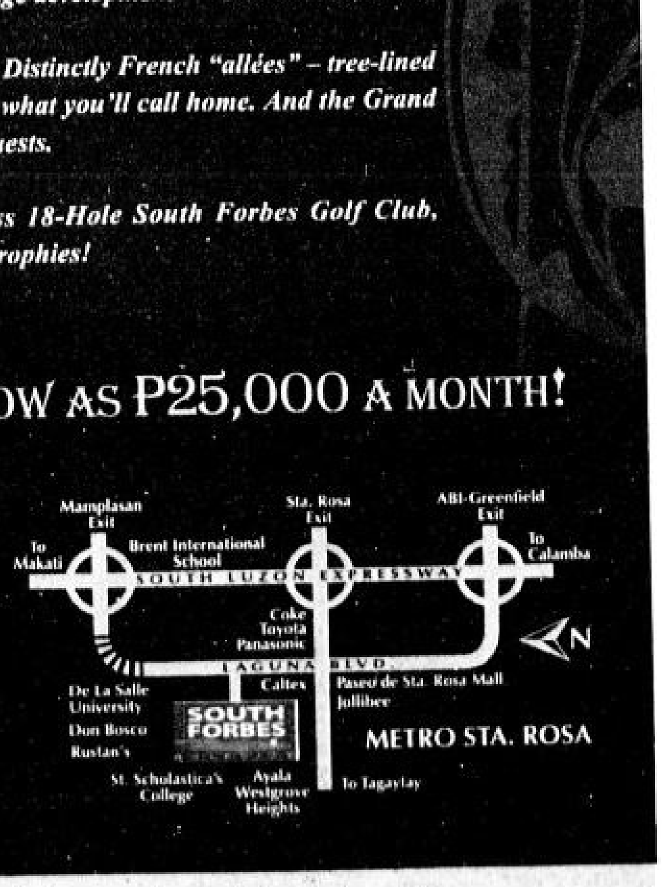

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BRITTANY'S PORTOFINO

Premier enclave south of Manila

GOOD FENCES, ROBERT Frost once wrote, make good neighbors. Too high a fence would wall people out. One too low, however, would deprive the homeowner of privacy. But at a height just right, it nurtures friendships as it does at Portofino.

A premiere development south of Manila by maverick real estate developer Brittany Corp., Portofino has created a unique district where a variety of enclaves come together as a true community of neighbors. Spanning over 300 hectares along the stretch of the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road, it is inspired by the Italian architecture and lifestyle—a way of living that is, in many ways, very Filipino as well.

"Just like the Italians, Filipinos are very sociable. We don't just live next to each other. We genuinely care about our neighbors. We are very friendly and we bring people into our homes and our lives. It is this very spirit that has moved us at Brittany Corp. to create a living space that nurtures this value," said Brittany president Jing Serrano.

Exclusive enclave

Just 30 minutes away from the central business district of Makati and only five minutes away from the commercial centers of Alabang is this exclusive enclave where the word neighborhood finds a whole new meaning. Clusters, rather than rows, of Italian-inspired homes are set against lush green gardens. Combining the grandeur of old Italy, the convivial spirit of the Filipino, and all the advantages of modern living at its highest standards, Brittany's Portofino has created a unique residential enclave that truly bestows upon its residents the sweetness of the high life.

"... Portofino was master-planned so uniquely. Everything about it is meant to foster social interaction without violating one's privacy. Within the beautifully crafted homes are courtyards or atriums where the family can gather. And rather than building rows of houses, the homes are situated in clusters to encourage contact among neighbors," Serrano stressed.

Various enclaves

The Portofino development includes various enclaves: Portofino Heights, Portofino South, Courtyards of Portofino I and II, Widelots of Portofino and The Masters Collection. The Italian-inspired architecture features sun-drenched colors, cobblestones, charming arches and a strong sense of openness that only comes with a thorough understanding of light and space.

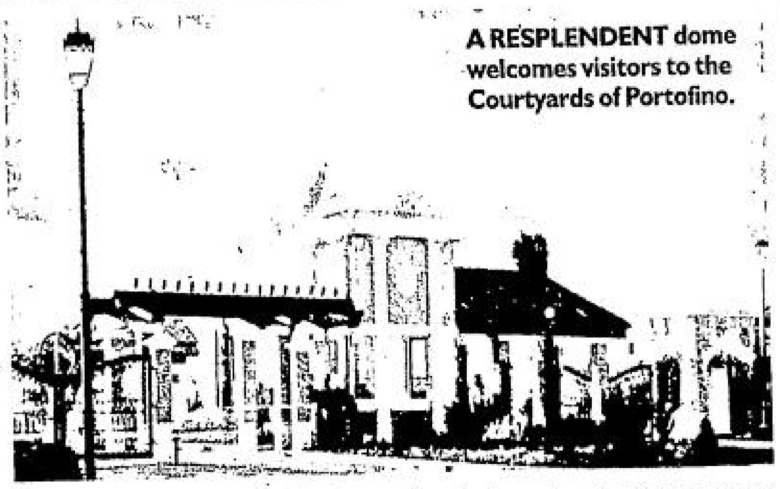
And because good fences make good neighbors, walls separating one property from the next are set at just the right height to showcase the fine Italian architecture without encroaching on the resident's privacy. Where it is possible, trees and hedges replace concrete walls—not just for esthetic purposes but for environmental ones as well. In place of these thick walls are high-tech security services that ensure the safety of all residents 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Masters Collection

Brittany's most recent offering, the Masters Collection, is a testament to the maverick developer's innovative spirit and its commitment to providing the highest standard of living possible. Aptly named after Italian masters of the arts, the Masters Collection includes six new model homes where every last element is crafted with the high life in mind.

As the first completed model home of the Masters Collection, the Michelangelo is best characterized by its unceasing attention to every minute feature. Michelangelo is a home that exudes grandeur and sophistication rather than flaunts it.

A STONE-CLAD cupola lends authentic Italian charm to the Raphael.



A RESPLENDENT dome welcomes visitors to the Courtyards of Portofino.

Rather than creating a separate enclave for the Masters Collection, these homes are intended to be integrated within the entire Portofino development. The floor areas of the six model homes range from 350 sq m to 650 sq m. Lot sizes reach to as much as 1,000 sq m. For as long as the client has a Portofino lot within the required lot range, he can choose a home that is part of the Masters Collection.

Premium utilities

The entire Portofino development boasts of premium utilities for its residents. To ensure an unobstructed view of the landscape, cables for power and communication were buried underground. Perimeter fences and buffer trees line the boundary lots to ensure security apart from the 24-hour system that safeguards the entire community. Deep wells and water reservoirs ensure a round the clock water service. Garbage is collected every other day. Most of all, a professional property management team secures the community and sees to it that the high standards are maintained long after the last lot has been purchased.

Brittany (Tel. nos. 850-2868 or 850-3084) and its properties remain as the investment of choice in real estate development today. More than just a safe investment, it has developed into a wise choice for homeowners with a vision for the future.

AYALA Land Premier's head of Leisure and Lifestyle Communities Group Marivic Añonuevo (far left) along with head of sales Tess Bloom (3rd from right) enjoy the festive atmosphere of the Family Time Endless Summers Weekend party.

MEMBERS of Alsi property specialists inform prospective buyers about the many features of Anvaya Cove, aided by a scale model of the site.

Anvaya Cove's endless summers recaptured at Greenbelt Park

PALM FRONDS, LUSH BAMBOO PLANTS and some simulated sea mist helped transport guests at Anvaya Cove's recent open house at Greenbelt in Makati to the idyllic 320-hectare seaside community along Morong bay in Bataan developed by Ayala Land Premier.

With the theme "Family Time, Endless Summers," the weekend party gave families a peek of what to expect at the community of rolling hills dipping down to over three kilometers of beach with fine sand.

First leisure dev't

The first leisure development of Ayala Land, the country's largest developer, seeks to be a venue for family bonding. Only two hours drive from Metro Manila, Anvaya Cove offers wooded lots with great views of the sea and the mountains. Unspoiled by development, it has a rich variety of flora and fauna above ground and under the sea in at least four coral formations. In fact, the Anvaya coastline serves as a sanctuary for *pawikan* or giant sea turtles some months of the year.

Ayala Land officers say their development seeks to retain as much as possible the natural habitat. The road networks respect the contour of the land and the presence of age-old trees. The Beach and Nature Club will sport low buildings that blend with the environment while offering a variety of aqua sports. Lot owners, who will be able to enjoy efficient facilities designed and maintained for residents' quality of life just like those in other Ayala properties, will be forbidden to install bright lights that face the sea and which may repel the giant turtles.

PARENTS and kids enjoyed hours of creative fun at the Family Time, Endless Summers Weekend Party of Anvaya Cove held at the Greenbelt 3 Park.

A large number of future Anvaya Club members enjoyed the morning getting acquainted with one another while learning more about the different amenities of the exclusive resort. Under yards of draped white cloth, they also enjoyed picnic food with shakes, soda and ice cream.

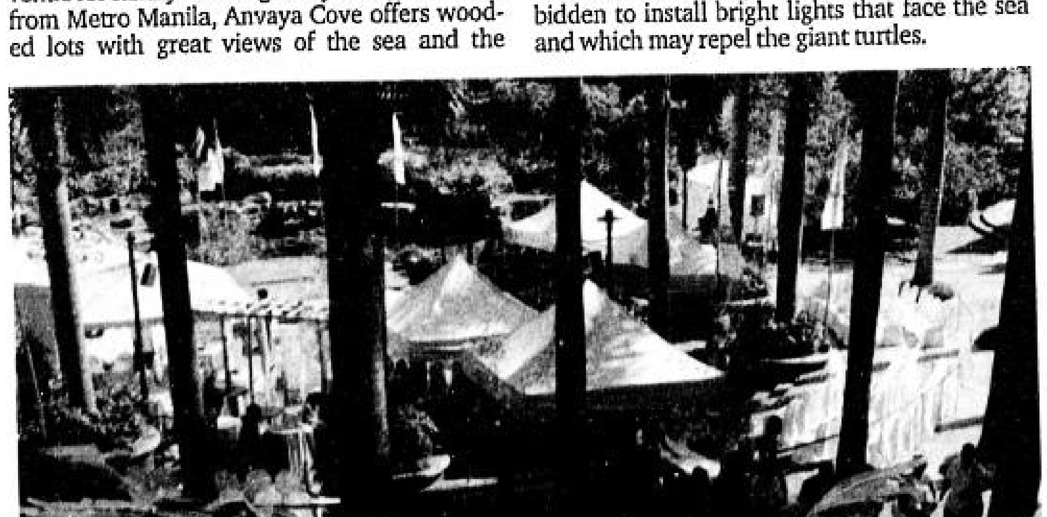
Activities

At one corner, the children gave vent to their artistic inclinations coloring cartons shaped like turtles and gluing sand on them. The bolder ones had their faces and limbs painted with flowers and butterflies. Amid all these, two mime artists mingled and entertained all.

At another corner, experienced therapists kneaded the tired muscles of guests and helped them get into the relaxing ambience of Anvaya Cove.

In the afternoon, winsome models showed off the latest summer outfits of Chocolate Clothing Co.

Ayala Land Premier is the new name for the top-end developments of Ayala Land providing security, ultimate comfort and privacy. It embodies Ayala Land's trademark legacy of enhancing the residents' quality of life with its portfolio of prime locations and trophy addresses. With its superior customer care and property management, ALP (tel. nos. 728-7000) ensures exclusivity and value over time.



THE ANVAYA Cove endless summer experience was recreated through festive tents, palm fronds and bamboo highlights at the Greenbelt Park.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

Upscale condo for students, yuppies

BUILT JUST ACROSS DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY AND NEAR THE College of St. Benilde and St. Scholastica's College, LizaLand Corp.'s newly developed Ivyhill Residences satisfies issues of accessibility and site convenience. It is within walking distance to the Vito Cruz LRT Station, and is just a short commute away from the PGH, Robinsons Place and SM City Manila.

A 15-story residential condominium with seven units per floor, the Ivyhill Residences offers spacious units that its residents can freely design according to their style and preference. Complete with amenities such as a multipurpose hall, a gym and aerobics room, a fully air-conditioned study hall, hi-speed elevators, modern fire protection systems, a 24-hour standby generator and ample water supply, Ivyhill's design is of a calculated fusion of ease, comfort, security and functionality.

Ivyhill Residences is exclusively marketed by Royale Homes Marketing Corp. (tel. nos. 723-4014, 726-4317 or 536-6750).

Economic multiplier effect

MANY REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS ARE EMBARKING ON TOWNhouse development to meet the huge demand from the middle-end sector, creating an economic multiplier effect as income and revenues are pumped back into the economy, according to Benson Perelonia, president of Duraville Realty and Development Corp.

"The economy gets a big boost from the development of thousands of townhouse units in the country's urban areas as construction activities generate work and consumption opportunities, income and revenues," he says. DRDC is into full-blast development of three middle-end townhouse projects, namely Somerset Place in Manggahan, Pasig City; Meadowood Royale Townhomes off Sumulong Highway in Antipolo City; and Mary Cris Complex (MCC) Executive Homes in Imus, Cavite.

DRDC chair Orlando S. Bongat adds that housing data also have a significant bearing on financial markets, mortgage services and allied industries. "This is the impetus behind DRDC's home development program," he says.

A townhouse, Perelonia points out, is the most practical urban housing type for the middle-income sector including the overseas Filipino workers whose top investment priorities are home ownership and education.

The units at Somerset Place, Meadowood Royale Townhomes, and MCC Executive Homes are designed around minimalist living efficiency and subdued elegance. Somerset Place has three house models, each with three bedrooms, prefabricated kitchen counters, carports, pocket gardens, gates and perimeter fences.

A Meadowood Royale townhouse unit has three bedrooms, two toilets and baths, a carport, a laundry area, and a pocket garden, while MCC Executive Homes offers spacious single-level and two-level units with three bedrooms, one to two T&B, carports, pocket gardens and individual gates.

DRMI (tel. nos. 634-8801, 634-8802 and 6348803) is the company's exclusive marketing arm. Brokers and sales agents are invited to enlist at DRMI's Duraville Academy for free training and business opportunity sessions.

22nd year of home building

THE HOMEOWNERS DEVELOPMENT Corp. LED BY PRESIDENT Jaime I. Hernandez celebrates its 22nd year of building homes and communities for middle-income families this month. Founded by its late chair, former Rizal vice governor Jose C. Hernandez, it has embarked on subdivision development in Rizal towns such as Cainta and San Mateo, Antipolo City and Metro Manila cities like Quezon, Pasig and Caloocan cities.

To HDC's credit are 26 projects, the latest four being Birmingham Meadows in Rodriguez, Rizal; Birmingham Alberto and Birmingham Diamante in San Mateo, Rizal, and Birmingham Plains, General Trias, Cavite. HDC ia a member of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) and Subdivision and Housing Developers Association (SHDA).

The earlier projects were Birmingham Homes 1, 2 and 3, and Panorama Hills, Antipolo City; Birmingham Sunrise, Bankers Village, San Mateo; Birmingham Place 1 and 2, Cainta; Metrogreen Village, Novaliches, Quezon City; Metropolis North Subdivision, Kalookan City; Metrogreen Village, Don Bosco Tech College (as general contractor, builder and administrator), Pasay City.

Golden Mile Subdivision, Roosevelt Park, Midland Homes, Cainta; Bridgestone Park Phase 1 and 2; Northwood Village, Metropolis Village 1 and 2, and Metrogreen Village in Pasig City; Markwood Area, Grand Valley Subdivision (joint venture with HDC as landowners), Angono, Rizal.

Five models are available. These are Gloucester, 110-sq-m floor area on 120-sq-m lot, living and dining rooms, two toilets and bathrooms, three bedrooms. maid's room, balcony and carport lanai; Northampton, 74-sq-m area, 120-sq-m lot area, three bedrooms, two T&B and carport; Southamton, two bedrooms, two T&B.

Coventry and Dover townhouse units of 50-sq-m floor area, 55- to 63 sq-m lot, two bedrooms and bathrooms. All models are fitted with room and kitchen cabinets, imported tiles for floor and bathroom finishes, prepainted long span roofing, painted steel casement windows, using steel bars, reinforced columns and beams and flooring for structural stability and finish. For inquiries, check www.hdc-realestate.com.

Newest 'Jewel' in the South

ONE OF THE NEWEST AND VERY INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE south is Westgate Alabang, a commercial and lifestyle hub that is turning out to be the retail, dining and wellness destination in this part of the Metro.

In this unconventional recreation venue, one can find a mix of fine-dining restaurants, bars, fitness and wellness clinics, specialty stores, hypermarket, home depot, fashion shops, services outlets and automotive centers. An added attraction is the spacious walkway that can be an ideal venue for street parties, outdoor events and mini concerts.

Westgate Alabang is where you can find some of the posh nightspots and perfect gimmick places like Koreana Restaurant, Zong, Congo Grille, Poquito Mas, Café Adriatico, Café Breton, Lanai Red Lounge Bar, and UCC Coffee Café Terrace.

Westgate Alabang is located at Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa.

METROPOLITAN GROUNDBREAKING
The Metropolitan Towers, a project by Philtown Properties, recently held the groundbreaking ceremony near the Metropolitan Athletic Club (MAC) on Estrella St., Makati. It will have special Sky loft units, which are furnished suites and some with 20-foot full-view glasses. Present during the groundbreaking are, from left, Philtown SVP for operations Mon Bienvenida, Jacob Ben-Moshé, Jess dela Fuente, Tina Periquet, Carlos Syquia, Philtown president and COO Terry Coronel, architects Bong Recio and Meloy Casas, MAC President Francisco Buencamino, and Philtown SVP for sales and marketing Kit Vergara.

Take the big leap to The Next Big Thing

THE CENTRAL Park Lagoon is among the numerous environment-friendly attractions at Ayala Westgrove Heights.

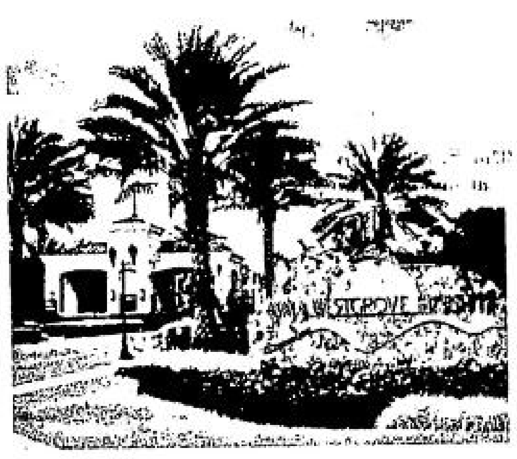
IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO are fed up with the frenzied pace of life in the urban jungle, then you're probably ready to live in the suburbs where you can enjoy more time for yourself and your family and experience true rest and relaxation.

But before you take that big leap, it's good to note a few important details in choosing that perfect suburban sanctuary. For one, you would still want to have accessible shopping malls and be near not only in places of business but also educational and medical institutions that offer top-flight services.

Moving to a new home in the suburbs also entails a big investment. With dozens of real estate developers cropping up, it's best to choose a reliable developer who can provide you with the best value for your hard-earned money.

Suburban haven

For many city-to-suburb switchers, one real estate project that answers these very essential details is Ayala Westgrove Heights, a suburban haven in Silang, Cavite developed by Ayala Land Premier. The best high-end residential community in the South and touted as "The Next Big Thing" after Ayala Alabang, Ayala Westgrove Heights is a fully integrated and master-planned community that promises a quiet suburban lifestyle while giving access to modern life's conveniences.



AYALA Westgrove Heights entrance gate

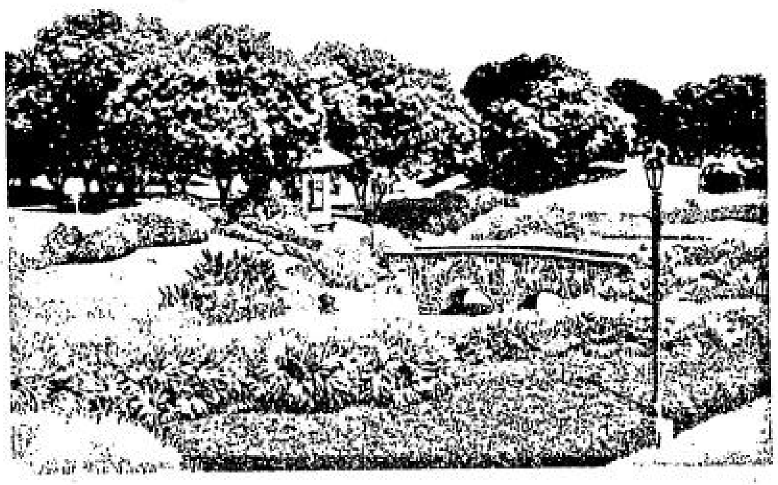
The first thing that would strike you as you enter Ayala Westgrove Heights is the gorgeous expanse of greenery. The development is built within a former mango orchard, and residents would literally enjoy breathing all that fresh air. The lush, gorgeous landscape, with its tall trees and wide open spaces offer an atmosphere of tranquility.

Attractions

A variety of environment-friendly attractions add to the charm of Ayala Westgrove Heights. Most of the open spaces in the village are actually preserved, and you would delight in taking in the beauty of nature from many different spots: the Central Park with its lagoons, fishing decks and gazebos; the mango orchard; and the Bird Sanctuary, which is home to over 90 species of birds.

Even from inside your home, you would certainly enjoy grand vistas. Ayala Westgrove Heights was designed to take advantage of the land's natural contours, giving varied yet gorgeous views of such natural wonders as the Laguna de Bay, Mount Makiling and Tagaytay.

While enjoying peace and quiet in this suburban haven, you're still not that far away from amenities that made living in the city convenient. Easily accessible from Ayala Westgrove Heights are top educational institutions such as St. Scholasticas' College-Westgrove, De La Salle University-Canlubang and Don Bosco, business establishments like Ayala Land's Laguna Technopark and shopping areas such as the Westgrove Plaza and Rustan's.



AYALA Westgrove Heights is a residential refuge amid lush greenery and mango groves filled with a wide variety of bird species.

But you don't have to go out of Ayala Westgrove Heights to have some rest and recreation, with three major clubhouses where residents can enjoy a host of amenities and activities—the only village to offer such a wide range of facilities.

At the village's clubhouse, you can go for a swim at the clubhouse's swimming pool or relax in the jacuzzi. There are tennis courts where you can get into a friendly game of doubles with the couple next door. The hubby can also play basketball with friends either in the indoor or outdoor courts. Meeting other residents is also not a problem, since there are always activities set up at the social hall for everyone's enjoyment.

Your kids are not left out of the fun, as Ayala Westgrove Heights also features the Kidsgrove Clubhouse, designed especially for the neighborhood children. With its junior-size basketball court, kiddie pool, indoor toddler room, and interactive wet and dry play areas, kids get to interact with other kids, have fun and make friends.

THE VILLAGE'S clubhouse has a swimming pool, jacuzzi, tennis courts, basketball court and a social hall.

Nearing completion is a sports complex that features indoor badminton and tennis courts as well as other sports activities for residents' enjoyment.

The Ayala Security Force maintains the safety and security of the entire Ayala Westgrove Heights development. Careful maintenance of the village is handled in turn by Ayala Property Management Corp.

Trademark legacy

As an Ayala Land Premier development, Ayala Westgrove Heights is sure to provide residents true value for their investment. As the new name for the top-end developments of Ayala Land, Ayala Land Premier offers its residents security, ultimate comfort and privacy. It embodies Ayala Land's trademark legacy of enhancing the residents' quality of life with its portfolio of prime locations and trophy addresses.

Moving from the city to the suburbs can be an easy choice, if you choose the best haven that offers a peaceful community, the convenience and accessibility, and, most importantly, that precious time for your family. At Ayala Westgrove Heights (Tel. No. 728-7000), it's surely worth it to make that big leap to The Next Big Thing.

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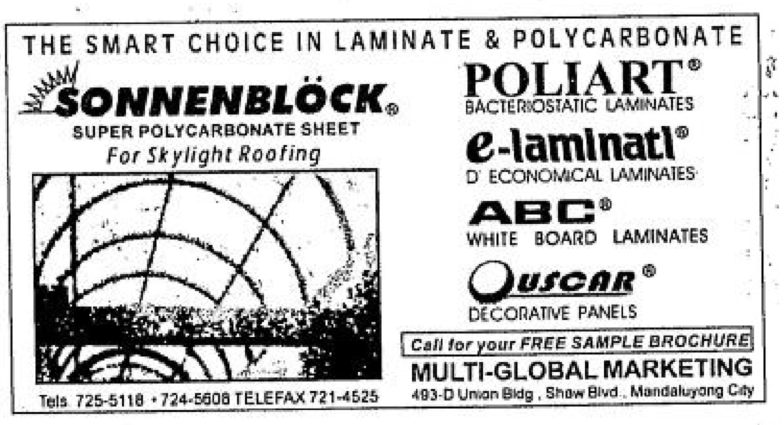

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DANSALAN GARDENS

A haven and an inspiration

RIGHT SMACK IN THE CENTER OF two business districts—Makati and Ortigas Center—rises another of DMCI Homes' development projects combining the best of everything in terms of location, price and quality.

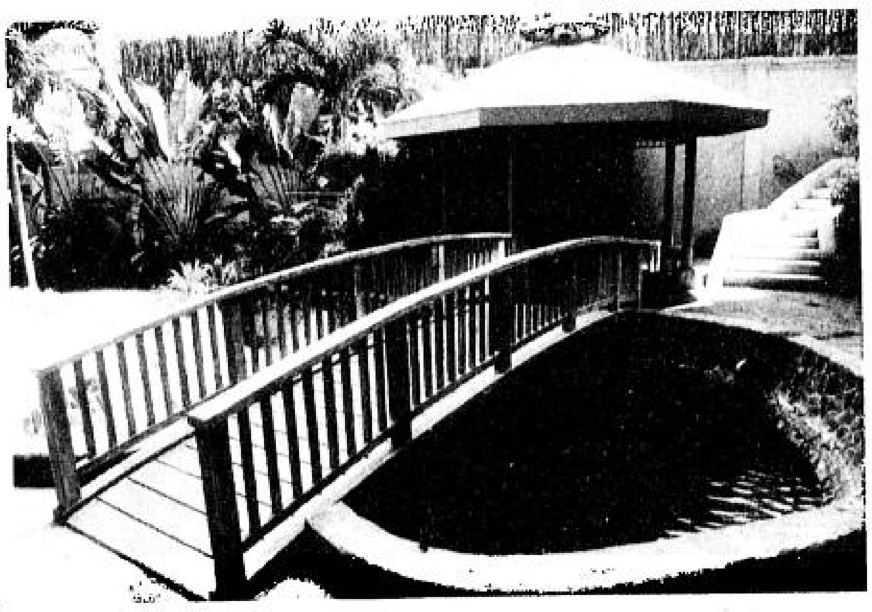
Dansalan Gardens in Mandaluyong City joins the company's roster of communities offering modern facilities and resort-type amenities in a lush garden setting. Condominium unit buyers looking for a residential haven happily end up finding inspiration as well in Dansalan Gardens whose available units, not surprisingly, were all snapped up in a short span of time.

Such overwhelming trust and excellence in DMCI Homes as a community builder has spurred the company to construct two more towers in the Mandaluyong development. "We expect similar fast turnover of units for these additional condo buildings," said Alfredo Austria, the firm's managing director. "We're hoping that our much improved facilities and highly efficient management of the property will count heavily toward the realization of this trend."

Refreshing break

A refreshing break from the usual cramped space and concrete jungle associated with urban living, Dansalan Gardens nestles on 8,000 square meters of prime land awash with gardens and breathing with vast open areas for recreation and meditation. This layout of unobstructed spaciousness carries over to the condo units with floor areas from 43 to 67 square meters.

Truly both a haven and an inspiration for the harried and hurried city dwellers, Dansalan Gardens has, among other cutting-edge structures typical in every DMCI Homes development, a fitness gym, yoga meditation area, business center, two swimming pools, a kiddie area, function rooms, lounge area, billiard hall and koi ponds.



KOI pond inspires meditation.

SANCTUARY in the metropolis

Premier consideration

Home hunters whose premier consideration is location will find much more than what they're looking for in the property. Not only does it lie close to the financial and commercial districts of Makati and Ortigas Center. It is also very accessible either via a private vehicle or the highly convenient and super fast Metro Manila Railway Transit (MRT), according to DMCI Homes marketing support manager Manny Arbues.

Access to modern convenience is also a distinguishing feature of the development. Once buyers move in, phone, cable and Internet connectivity will already be in place. Also, an efficient property management will take another worry off the homeowners—the upkeep of the facilities including quick unit repairs when required.

Living in Dansalan Gardens is actually living in a sanctuary in the middle of the metropolis, making acquisition of its condo units, priced from P1.6 million to P9 million per, a wise investment indeed. Those needing further information about the property may call 888-3333 or visit www.dmcihomes,com.

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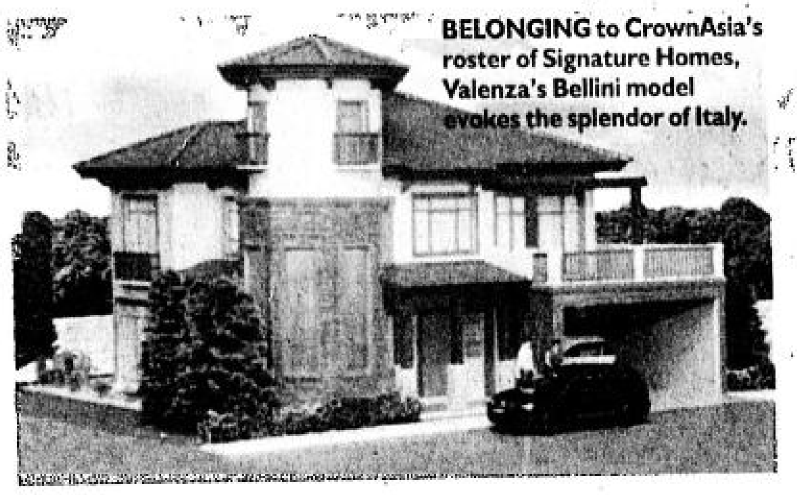
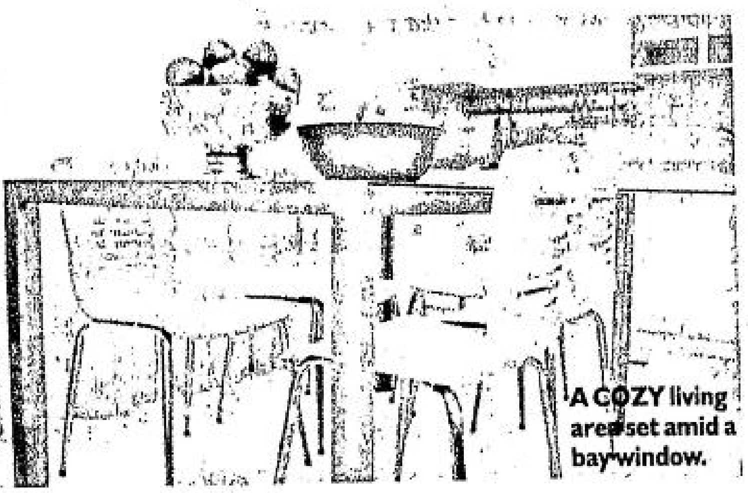
THE AMERICAN country inspiration of CottonWoods lend a warm and comfortable atmosphere.



BELONGING to CrownAsia's roster of Signature Homes, Valenza's Bellini model evokes the splendor of Italy.



A COZY living area set amid a bay window.

A distinct address at CrownAsia's Signature Homes

AS THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST HOMEbuilder, CrownAsia understands how today's upwardly mobile urbanites know what they deserve and want out of life. An aspiration which does not end with just building a roof above your head, the creation of living spaces within master-planned enclaves serve as the foundation for the Signature Homes of CrownAsia.

The Signature Homes of CrownAsia are meant to reflect the personality, lifestyle and taste of its future residents—giving distinct characteristics which turn them into stand outs. Since most of its residents are self-made, it is important for them that investments reap rewards, such valued possession is the Signature Homes of CrownAsia, truly a home to call their own.

- **Mille Luce.** Meaning "a thousand lights" in Italian, Mille Luce is nestled on the greenest and highest peak of Antipolo, making it a "haven" between the stars and city lights. Residents can experience the height of living in sensible luxury with a selection of Italian-inspired model homes sited in the community's various clusters.

RICH tones complement the elaborate details found in the dining room.

- **CottonWoods.** Taking inspiration from American country-style homes, the 40-hectare CottonWoods community in Antipolo, Rizal boasts of a warm and comfortable ambiance. A number of CottonWoods residents are artists and families desiring a home with serene surroundings and unspoiled nature.
- **Valenza.** A retreat from the bustling metropolis while enjoying the comforts of the urban lifestyle, Valenza (meaning "value" in Italian) is a quaint residential community located in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Italy's splendor is reflected with architectural accents and warm earth tones while complemented by the vista of Mt. Banahaw and Tagaytay Ridge.
- **Ponticelli.** Coined from the Italian words "ponti" (meaning bridge) and "celli" (meaning skies), Ponticelli on Daang Hari, Alabang is an enclave characterized by the impression of the beautiful, sloping terrain converging with the serene skies. As the new signature township of CrownAsia, practical style serves as the cornerstone of Ponticelli, while thorough master-planning creates an Italian-inspired township.

Property previews may be arranged by calling Crown South at 871-3882, 873-1614, and 873-8412; Crown North at 634-9001 to 02 or visit www.crownasia.com.ph on the Web.

Caribé of The Islands breaks ground

PROPERTY MAVERICK BRITTANY CORP. sustains the fast-paced development of Caribé, one of five enclaves currently rising at The Islands in Dasmariñas, Cavite, with the recent groundbreaking for Guadeloupe, the first of five model homes to be showcased in the enclave. The model home's groundbreaking comes just over a month after Caribé's launch, auguring the benefit of speedy turnover to residents.

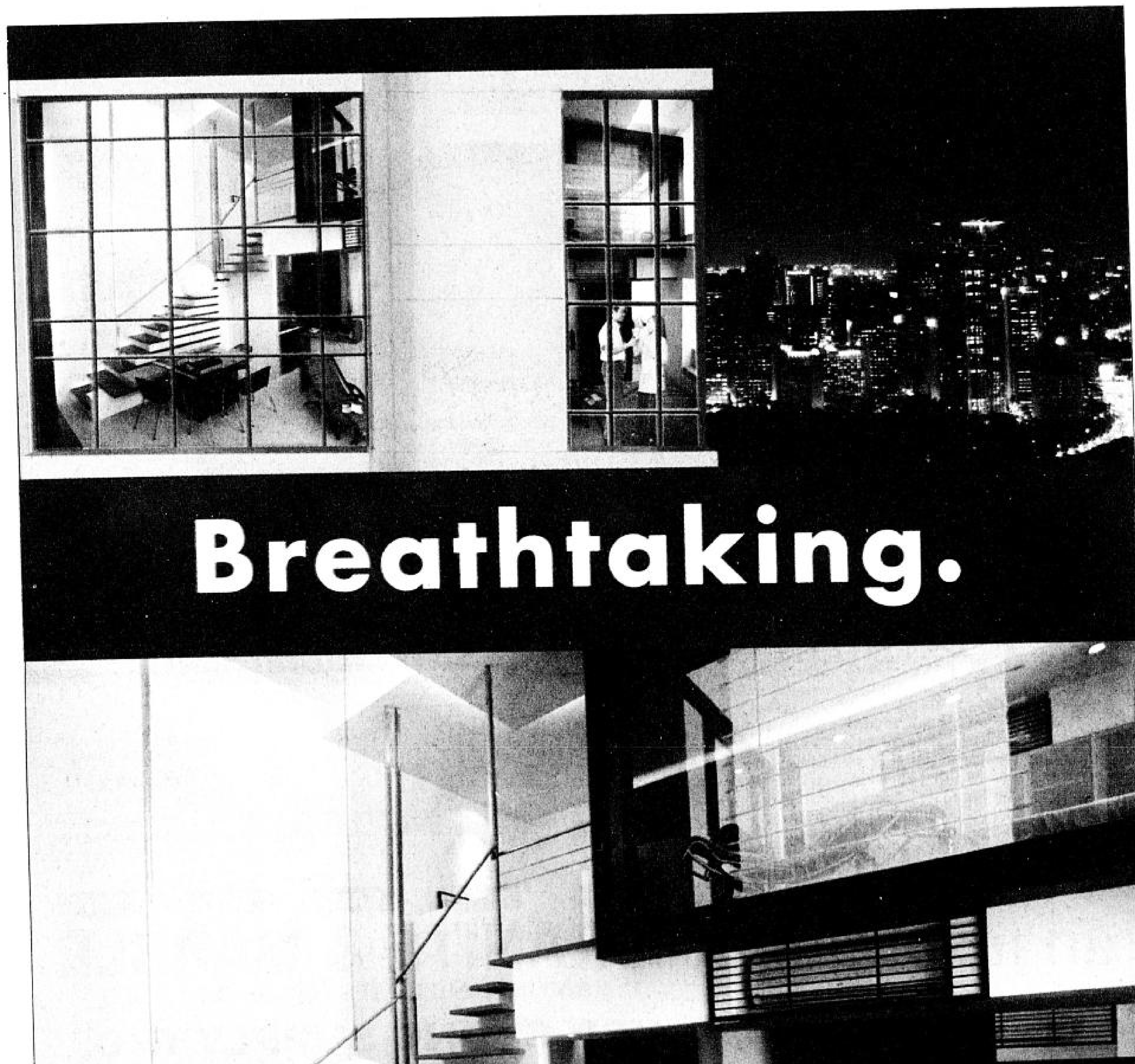
The Islands, with lush tropical landscaping amid great spaces refreshed by breezes under wide skies, is a high-end, master-planned collection of enclaves creating residential "lifescapes" (a Brittany signature) inspired by some of the world's leading island resort destinations that speak of leisurely enjoyment. Joining its sister enclaves Ibiza, Island Park, Montego and Amalfi, Caribé is The Islands' latest offering, a 4.3-hectare enclave for a niche market of residents seeking a laidback and luxurious "lifescape" after blazing successful careers in their chosen businesses or professions.

First in enclaves

Offering custom home sites (lots only) as well as home and lot packages, Caribé is a first in enclaves for such a market, because it exclusively offers single-story, sprawling home designs built around an open floor plan, influenced by those Caribbean-themed homes in fashionable Florida communities like Palm Beach. The architecture as well as exteriors and interiors create a sense of those Florida homes.

As with other Caribé home designs, Guadeloupe, with 208 sq m of floor space, is distinguished by a gabled façade, colorful, textured exterior walls framed by white moldings, shuttered windows and doors, an array of thoughtful details reminiscent of classic Florida homes. The open floor plan is highlighted by the "great room" which serves as the main function area for each home. A Caribé home is not complete without a wide veranda and a master's suite with a spacious walk-in closet and bathroom.

The Islands offer the amenities of Club Island, the country club which will offer leisure facilities in a beautiful, tropical ambiance, including a free-form pool with cabanas.



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hot Mama!

Lexi Schulze lost herself to Motherhood
page E1

Tessa's Athena turns one!
page C2

Raya Mananquil's Spanish sojourn
page D1

Gino de la Paz explores Mother Philippines
page D4

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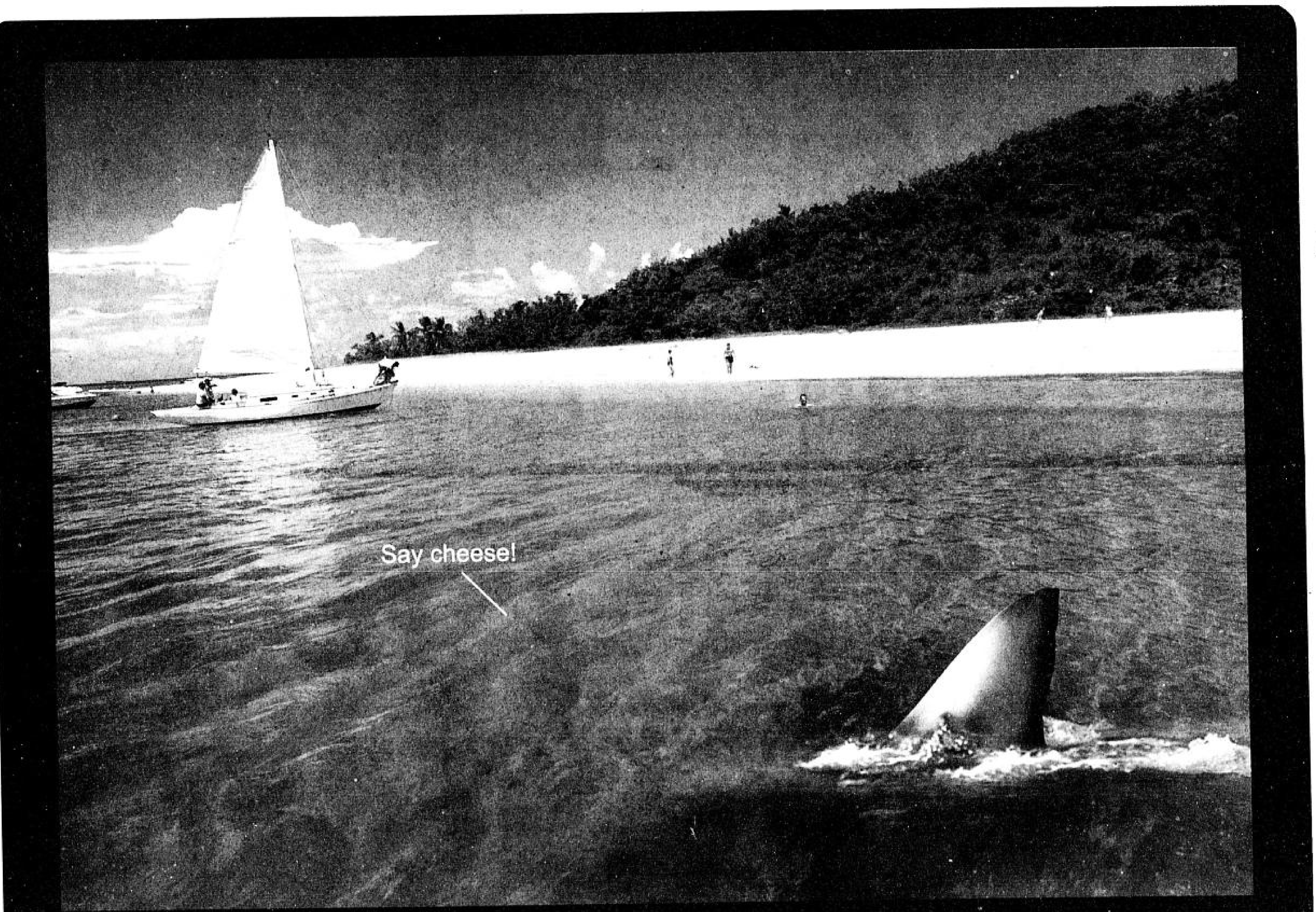

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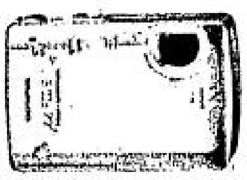
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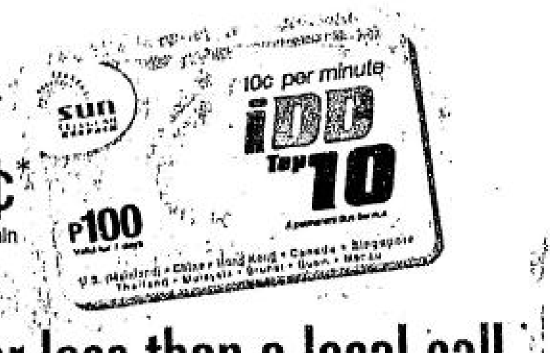
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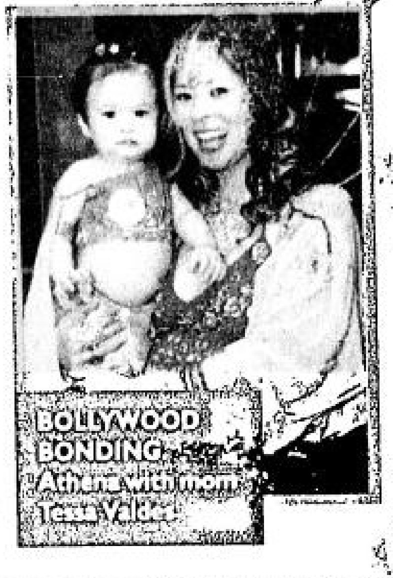
PRESIDENTIAL ANGELS. Angel Arroyo and her two cherubs

MOMMY DEAREST. Iya and Alessandra Lagdameo

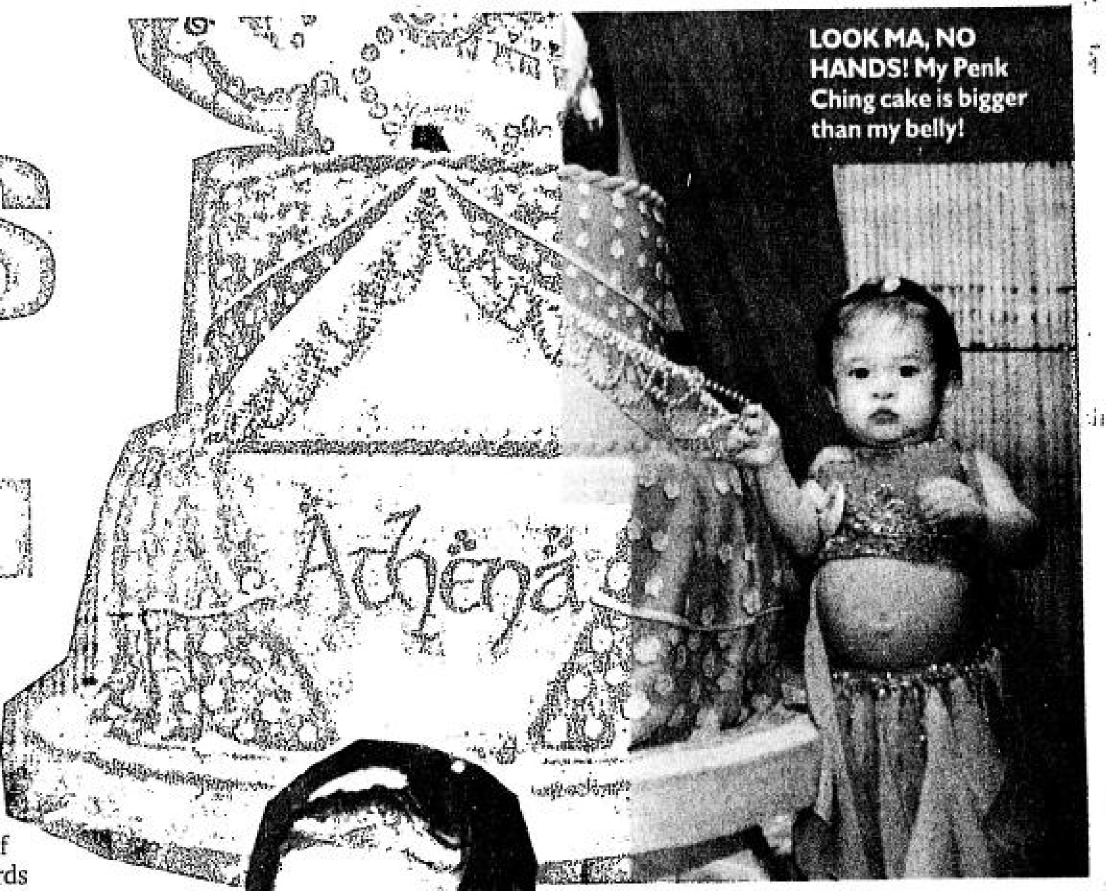
MOTHER AND SON DELUXE. Ingrid and my godson Julian Go

MAXIMUM FREEWAY. Sheree Gotuaco and her Max

EPPERSON-IFIED. Twin souls Jenni and Aryanna Epperson


BOLLYWOOD BONDING. Athena with mom Tessa Valdes

Bollywood baby bash for Athena's birthday number one


LOOK MA, NO HANDS! My Penk Ching cake is bigger than my belly!

Photos by Willy Saw

Tim Yap

WHAT KIND OF MOTHER would go all out and whip up a production worthy of a Bollywood epic, send out pre-party announcements aside from the actual invitations itself and hire cross-dressing belly dancers to gyrate around her fourth-born baby?

Even seasoned eventologists do not spend this much time and effort in staging a shindig. Then again, not all party planners are like **Tessa Prieto-Valdes**, our very own Sea Princess, whose **Athena** (a Super! baby) just turned one year old. (It's been a year! We at Super! are getting sentimental.)

In true Indian fashion, an elephant greeted the guests as they entered. It wasn't a real elephant, but a topiary version of one of Hinduism's most majestic mammals. Athena was wearing a belly bearing chiffon creation concocted by her god designer, **Rajo Laurel** (who else?). The rest of the Valdes family wore yards and yards of Bollywood finery, plus glitter, face paint and bindi.

I went to **Max Talreja** for my Prince of Jai-rich outfit (I didn't want to be Prince of Jai-poor), and he had with him an embroidered tunic that matched my **Henri Calayag** mauve tinted hair!

The beautiful kids

"*Sobrang bait 'yan*," Athena's *yaya* made me *kwento* while I cuddled my goddaughter in my arms. I looked around and spotted too many beautiful kids—they were all very much into the moment, wearing bright and colorful clothes and were well adjusted to adults. They were all dancing, even after the music had already stopped. I guess the orange juice was that good (I want some!). Or was it the chocolate fondue fountain?

The mothers gamely watched their kids partake of the fun and games, not to mention the tons of prizes that Tessa and **Annika** gave away. Dad **Dennis** and bro **Tyrone** smiled from ear to ear.

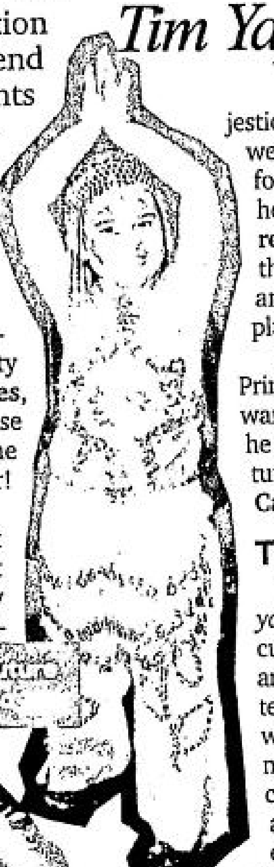
Watching the moms now made me realize how parenthood has changed. Whereas before, the mothers would be pushy and urge their kids to "join the games!"—these days, the young moms just sit quietly and let their rugrats play around freely. I guess it's because they're confident that they have raised their children well. Kudos to "Smart Parenting!"

I am very excited to see how these beautiful kids will grow. With what I saw that day, with Athena and her harem behaving with so much poise, grace and energy—I foresee myself chronicling their party lives in the next few years.

I CAN show you the world, shining, shimmering [illegible]

BOLLYWOOD STAR. Ela Pangilinan in party mode

MATINEE IDOL. Tyrone Valdes [illegible]


ANNIKA's [illegible] column photo

WATCH out Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie!

BOLLYWOOD BABY. Athena in Rajo Laurel

PRIETOS AT PLAY. Ria Prieto, Luca with mom Sandy Romualdez and bro Paolo P.

BINDI BOND. The maternal instincts of Marixi Prieto with daughter Tessa Valdes with daughters Annika and Athena as dad Dennis looks on.

ATHENA AND Ninong Tim with 1-year-old Athena

TANTRIC TRIO. Teresa Herrera, Laica Carpo and Kris Mijares

TWIN STARS. Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre

MOMS INQ. Sandy Romualdez and Kit Zobel

DENNIS AND ATHENA'S HAREM. These are the beautiful kids I'm talking about

MOTHER, *ANG GANDA MO!* Tessa, the gay icon, with her own harem.

Mother may I ...

watch the Side A concert this Thursday?

By Pam Pastor

ELEVEN MOMS, ONE cause, one band, one charity concert. That is this week's big equation.

Brought together by their kids who go to Miriam College Grade School, Cheryl Sarmiento, Raquel Antonio, Iris Lorica, Marivic Pilar, Nanette Macalino, Kaye Ignacio, Bambi Temeña, Peachy de Leon, Lala Medina, Gelyn Sibayan and Annie Hojo bonded and became friends. Realizing that they all had a background in events management and show production, they decided to form MXI (M stands for mommies, XI for number 11), a management group that produces concerts, fashion and variety shows.

This coming Thursday—May 18—is a big day for these hot mommas because they're holding a concert for the Side A Band at the Metro Concert Bar in West Ave. Quezon City.

Tickets are a double-edged sword. Not only will you get to watch one of the country's most beloved bands, you will also be helping the Servants of Charity. Part of the proceeds of the show will be donated to this charitable institution for the multiple handicapped.

So go bond with mom, enjoy a night of great music and support a good cause at the same time.

The show, which is sponsored by Smart and PCSO, will start at 8 p.m. For tickets and other inquiries text or call 0917-8333391, 0917-8220221 or call Metro Concert Bar at 374-7505.

• •

Myx Styling Extreme 2006

ANOTHER EXCITING EVENT comes to Manila, when Myx Styling Extreme brings in a full tank of fun and fabulous rides of sights. Positioned as being in the forefront of sport compact car culture, see Myx Styling Extreme shed its expertise in an exhibition of the fastest—and flashiest—coupes in the global highway. And, sure, maybe some bikini car wash girls to-go for them who prefer their cars clean.

Expected to converge at the World Trade Center in Roxas Boulevard on May 19 and 20 are car aficionados, automotive detail artists, moving musicians and red hot models both local and foreign, and big stars, too!

Two incredible days and two unforgettable nights of speed, style and some serious fun to keep your tanks loaded, engines revving and speedometers spinning for more years to come. It may have yet to start, but Myx Styling Extreme 2006 is expecting a record number of participants and attendees that their SX 2007 tour is set to be underway.

This is the weekend when all cars reign supreme and when all drivers are king. This is the weekend when Myx Styling Extreme 2006 takes the lead and leaves all tired and worn transport shows in the dust. Truly, this is Manila motoring scene's finest hour.

For contact information and further details, check out the Myx Styling Extreme website at www.stylingxtreme.com or call 752-2132.

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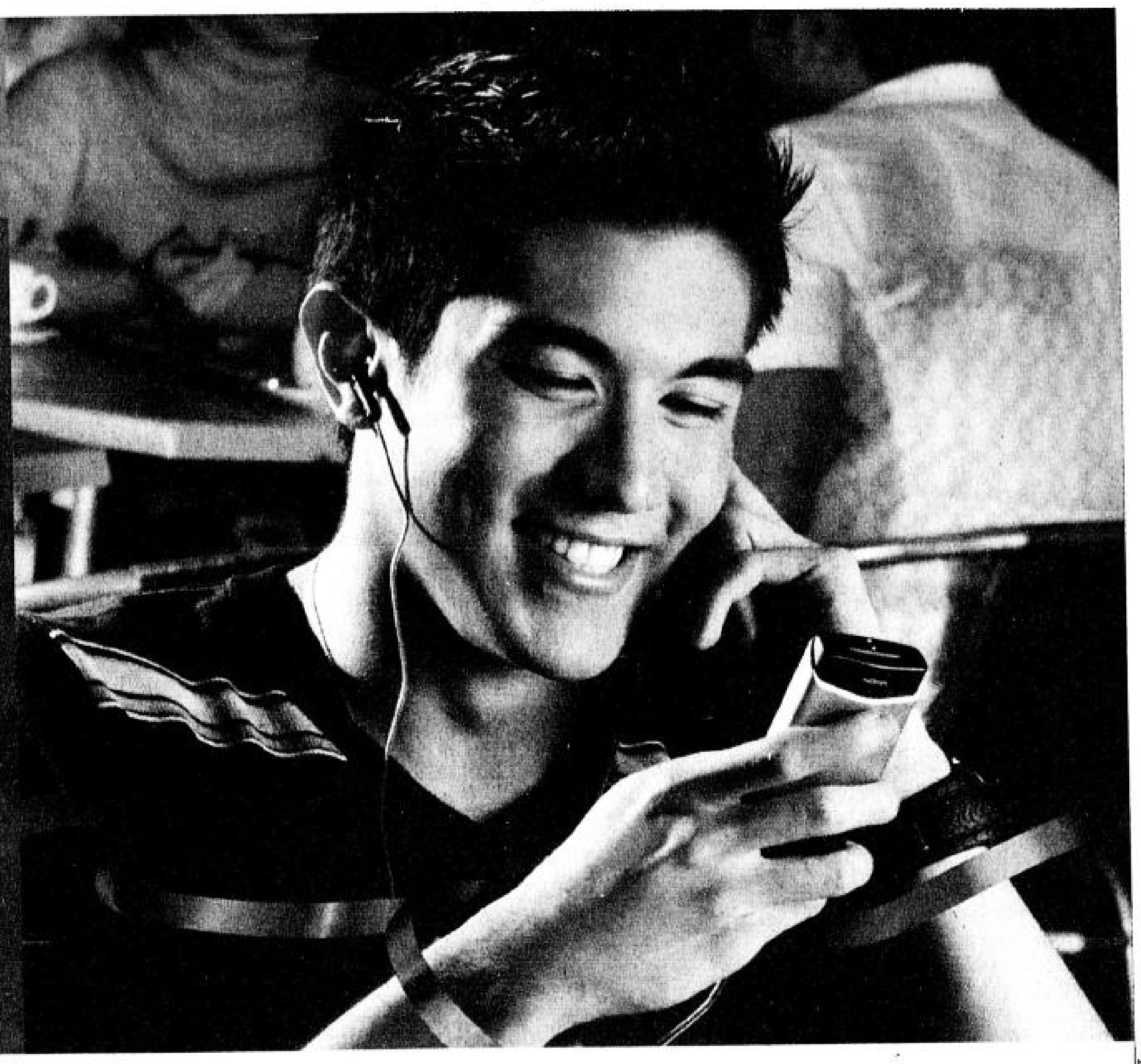

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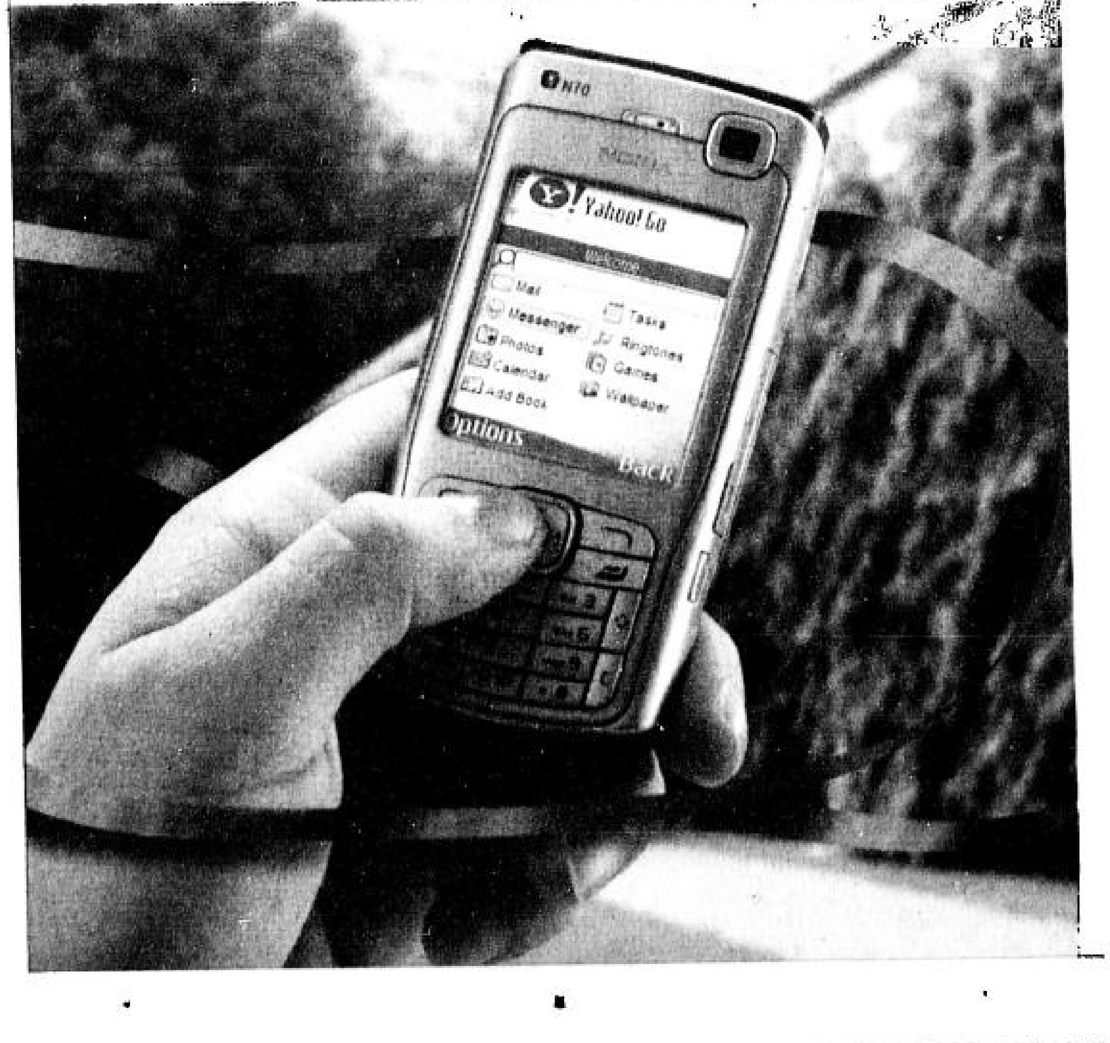

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Sí, Spain!

FOUR princesses at Palacio Royal: Tara Asturias, Marian Seva, Katrina Asturias and Alessandra Felix.

WALKI [illegible] Avil

Beyond the Runway

Raya Mananquil

MY BOYFRIEND CLAIMS HE CAN speak three languages: English, Australian and American. Well, in that case I can speak five—including Filipino and Spanish. Spain has always been one of my dream destinations, so when I was given the opportunity to travel there as group leader to four Filipino students—Alessandra Felix, Marian Seva, and sisters Tara and Katrina Asturias—on an immersion for five weeks, I saw it as a chance to brush up on the Español I learned from my alma mater, Poveda.

Our destination was Avila, where majority of the population consisted of children, teenagers and senior citizens, because most of the graduate twenty-somethings have left to work in Barcelona or Madrid. In that small town, English was a language recently included in their academics, and even then the youngsters did not speak it. The four girls I accompanied were to take their language, culture, history and gastronomy classes at Instituto Español Murallas de Avila, where believe it or not, the teachers who taught foreigners Spanish, barely spoke a word of English.

Avila, aside from being the home of St. Theresa of Jesus, is also known as a walled village, reminiscent of the Intramuros. The churches, schools, shops, cafes and homes are located within and the surrounding walls makes it a tranquil and safe town. "The best part about Avila was walking around and exploring it on our own and seeing the quarto postes," Marian Seva, one of the students says. When these girls insisted that they get a taste of the nightlife, I chaperoned not expecting to walk into a discoteca full of teenagers dancing to the Macarena and the Ketchup song and doing the chicken dance. It seemed like synchronized dance moves was their idea of fun, but at least no one was smoking or taking drugs.

Even if my Spanish was a little bit rusty, I was amazed to realize how much words we had adopted in the Filipino language beyond *coche* and *silla*. "Que bobo!" my host would say to herself every time her 80-year-old mind failed to remember something. But never call them cono, because believe me, it certainly does not refer to an upper-class mestizo over there. And if all else fails, add the letter "o" to any English word and there's a good chance they'll understand-oceano, fragmento, exotico… right-o!

When I expected this trip to be good practice, I was definitely thrown in the deep end. Everything on television and in the cinema was dubbed in Spanish. From "Los Simpsons" to "Star Wars, Episodio Tres." And I quote mi pequeno amigo verde Yoda, "Fe en tu nuevo aprendiz es un error tener, asi como tu fe en el lado oscuro de la fuerza." Truly bizarre. I admit I had to watch it again in English for my sanity.

Meal times were always highly anticipated,

SÍ SPAIN/ D2

SOL Y DIOS: Beauty and wonder at the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo in El Escorial

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AT THE INSTITUTO ESPAÑOL MURALLAS DE AVILA. Katrina Asturias, Raya Mananquil, Corey Wills, Director Rainer Rutkovski, Assistant Director Karolina Losinska, Jose-Luis Garcia Hernandez (behind), General Director of Studies and Programs, Tara Asturias and Alessandra Felix

THE FAMOUS [illegible] must-try. Katrina Asturias, Tara Asturias, Alessandra Felix and Marian Seva give it the thumbs-up.

KATRINA Asturias, Tara Asturias, Alessandra Felix, Marian Seva, Raya Mananquil and Corey Wills at the Roman aqueduct in Segovia

Sí, SPAIN!

From page D1

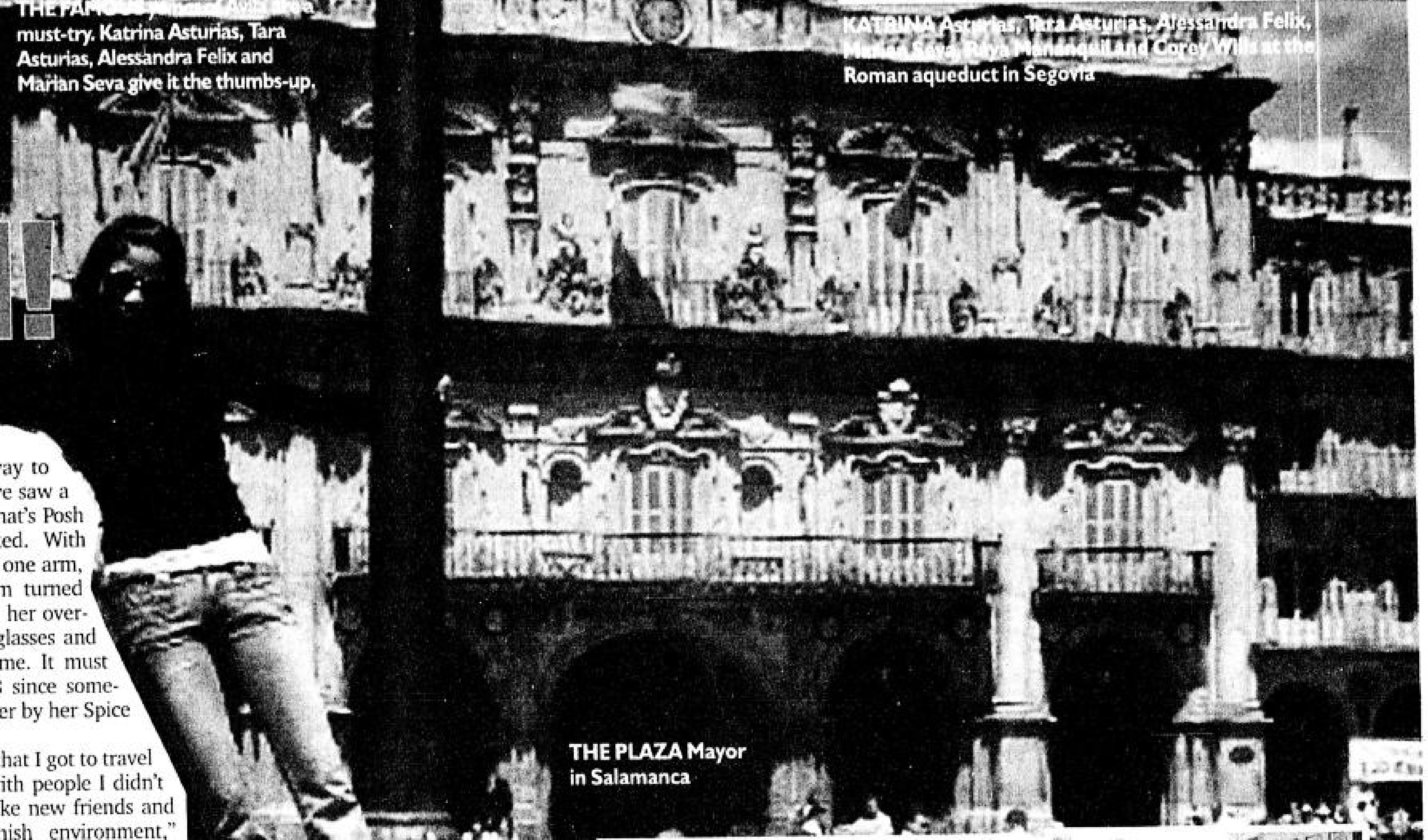
because although the Spanish always ate fashionably late, my tummy was chronically grumbling. Breakfast was served at 11 a.m., lunch at 2:30 p.m. and dinner at 10 p.m. Deciding we all missed our Asian chow, we searched for a Chinese restaurant one night to satisfy our craving. Like most Chinese restaurants all around the world, this was also run by their own. As we eagerly ordered our choices of stir-fries and rice, the waitress stood and stared blankly at us. And at that moment I realized that she, along with the entire staff, spoke only Chinese and Spanish.

But of course, the girls and I enjoyed our excursions to Segovia, Salamanca, El Escorial and Madrid. In Segovia, we marveled at the beautiful construction of the Roman aqueduct. In Salamanca, the Baroque architecture of Plaza Mayor combined with modern bars and cafes located behind the arches was a fascinating contrast. The immense Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo in El Escorial is a palace, museum, library and monastery. Madrid, perhaps our most anticipated trip, did not disappoint—there were the artworks at the Museo del Prado which houses the collections of Goya, Velazquez, and Murillo to name a few, the formal royal residence of Palacio Royal and the Rastro, a weekend open-air market, and street performers in between.

Making our way to Puerta del Sol, we saw a familiar face. "That's Posh Spice!" I shrieked. With son Brooklyn on one arm, Victoria Beckham turned around, lowered her oversized Gucci sunglasses and glared right at me. It must have been 1998 since someone last called her by her Spice Girl pseudonym.

"It was great that I got to travel around Spain with people I didn't really know, make new friends and live in a Spanish environment," Alessandra said, who at 16 has always traveled with her family. Tara and Katrina, who both traveled abroad for the first time, gained lessons beyond those you can get from the classroom. While the 800-year colonization may be history, these four young girls got a taste of their independence in Spain.

Institute of Foreign Study offers language courses in Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and China as well as post-graduate courses in Australia and in the UK. For the young ones, ages 10-17 years old, IFS is currently accepting applications for the seacamp and astrocamp for 3 weeks in the USA. Check out their website www.ifsphil.net or call 812-1187, 812-6229 for more information.



THE PLAZA Mayor in Salamanca

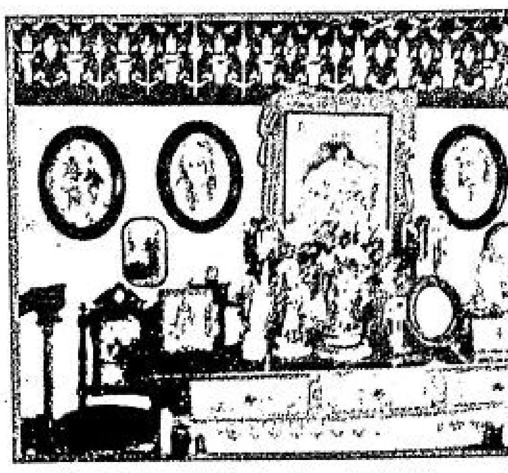
SIDETRACKED at the Barcelona beach. Raya Mananquil, Alessandra Felix, Katrina Asturias and Tara Asturias

MI AMIGO mestizo, Marco Lobregat in Barcelona

PHOTOS BY GINO DELA PAZ AND HEIDI PASCUAL

FRONTIN'. The St. Catherine Church and its Byzantine architecture

DO NOT DISTURB. My room with a view at Maribago



SMELLS LIKE SEPIA. Cool period stuff inside the Balay na Tisa

Rural legends

From page D4

home is also called Balay na Tisa, referring to the clay roofing tiles that helped cool houses during that era. For a small donation, you can freely do a room-to-room romp and see how our ancestors lived without indoor plumbing, iPods, or WiFi. How vintage!

What would rural tourism in an ex-Spanish colony be without a few churches? Dating back to 1859, Carcar's St. Catherine Church was my next destination. Aside from its Byzantine influence, I also noticed faces of saints and angels beaming down from a distinctly Greco-Roman altar. (I must say that was a great respite from Manny Pacquiao's cross-eyed mug staring down from countless billboards in the city. But I digress.) While you're at it, take note of the church's architectural nuances and notice how the twin-bell towers mirror a minaret shape, oddly similar to the ones found in Muslim mosques.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, MAINIT. Me by the Cuartel ruins in Oslob

Wow, Argao!

Established as a *pueblo* in 1608, the town of Argao has got to be one of the oldest in the province of Cebu. The name came from Saliargao, a tree which grew abundantly along the coast back in the colonial days.

TASTE TEST. Try the Torta de Argao and tell me what you think

YES, THEY'RE HERE, TOO. Koreanspotting at Sumilon Island

Within its geographic boundaries lies the Puerta Real, a coral stone barrier used for protection against Moro raids during the Spanish rule. And worth a peek, too, are the Casa Real and the 300-year-old Alex Kafé, for a taste of their interesting *torta*. I have my own opinion about this delicacy but I want you to try it for yourself and tell me what you really think. (Wink.)

For a taste of Argao's other attractions, there's always the rice terraces of Barangay Linut-od and Butong. But if you really wanna dip your feet in the sea, try Lawis Beach in Poblacion. Now called the skim boarding capital of Cebu, it always has righteous waves whether its *habagat* or *amihan*.

Oh! Oslob

The name of this town was the result of not having an interpreter. A group of Spanish dudes came to Bolocboloc, Oslob's original name, and saw a local couple dipping their cooked bananas into a bowl of salt. The white folks asked for the name of the place and the brown folks, clueless in *Español*, answered "*toslob-toslob*," meaning "dipping," assuming they were being asked what they were doing. (At least they weren't taking a dump, right? And why do they like doubling-doubling their words? Digression alert!) The name stuck and it was shortened years later.

One of the most intriguing points in Oslob is the Immaculate Conception Parish Church, a 200-year-old Romanesque structure. Apart from being a house of worship, it also frontlined as a defense complex against the ancient marauders. Right near this church is a series of arches called the Cuartel, intended as a barracks for the Spanish troops. Unfinished since the Americans arrived in 1899, the coral stone walls still stand, perfect for *pang*-blog photo ops and whatnot.

All these places lead up to Sumilon Island, one of the best dive spots in the Visayas and the site of a centuries-old *baluarte*, or watchtower. Having played a huge role during the Christian-Muslim struggle of 1813, Sumilon and all its past treasures now earn column inches as a relaxing retreat. *Ayos!*

Tourism inventory

Meanwhile, back to community-based tourism. In a brilliant presentation, Mr. Samie Lim of the PCCI said that tourism is one of the golden lights in our economic horizon. We may have been overtaken by China in terms of manufacturing and by Thailand when it comes to agriculture, but WOW Philippines can still bring in the bling through tourism.

According to him, the five A's of successful tourism development are attitude, access, accommodations, attractions and advertising. Community support is also essential and the most acceptable and least disruptive guidelines should be employed. The constituents of Argao, for example, agreed that tourism in their town should create jobs and income for locals while emphasizing respect for native culture. They also want it to have minimal impact on their present way of life and maintain the existing level of environmental quality. *O-ha.*

It sounds like a tall order but it can be done. Julie is totally optimistic about the endeavor. She adds that things like this tend to take off, especially when "the right people come together at the right time for the right reasons." Know what? I really believe her.

For more information on the Turismo Rural Foundation, contact Julie Alegrado-Vergara, c/o Maribago Bluewater Beach Resort, Mactan Island, Cebu. Tel. (032) 232 5411. Fax. (032) 492 0128. E-mail: bluwater@mozcom.com.

To arrange an Argao Heritage Tour, visit www.argaotourism.com.

For reservations at Sumilon Bluewater Island Resort, contact the Manila office at tel. (632) 817-5751, telefax (632) 845-0680 or email bluwater@pworld.net.ph.

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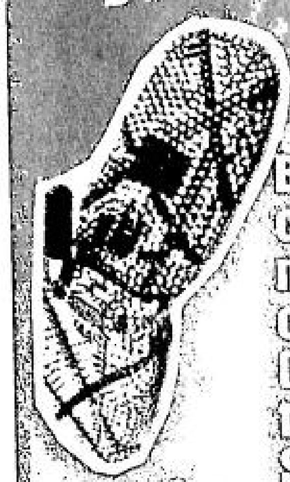
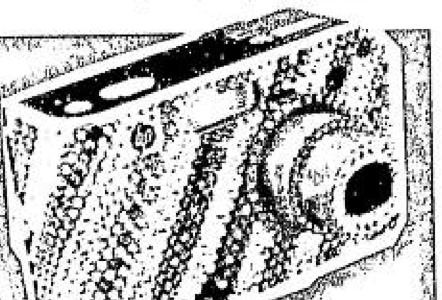
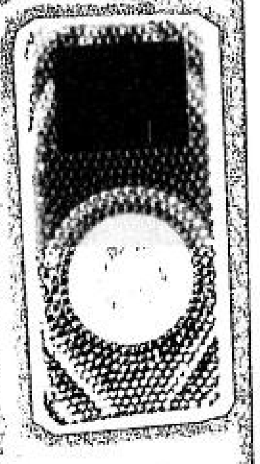


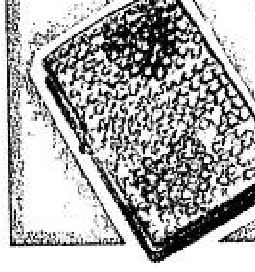


HAVE YOU NOTICED how some gadgets tend to look too bland and unflattering? Bling Ring, the only company in the country that can turn anything into functional jewelry, has made it their mission to rescue those boring mobile phones, iPods, BlackBerrys and digital cameras from style suicide.

The fancy face-lift is quite simple, really: just bring your phone (or whatever), pick the colors and the design, wait for 15 minutes, and boom! It's a Swarovski-studded masterpiece just for you. (Don't forget to pay of course.) As they say, I am nothing without the bling. *Gino dela Paz*

If you want to have your stuff blinged, drop by [illegible] Bling Ring at Shell Canvas, 3rd [illegible] tel. [illegible]728-9720 and [illegible] Shangri-La Plaza Mall, tel. 910-3227.





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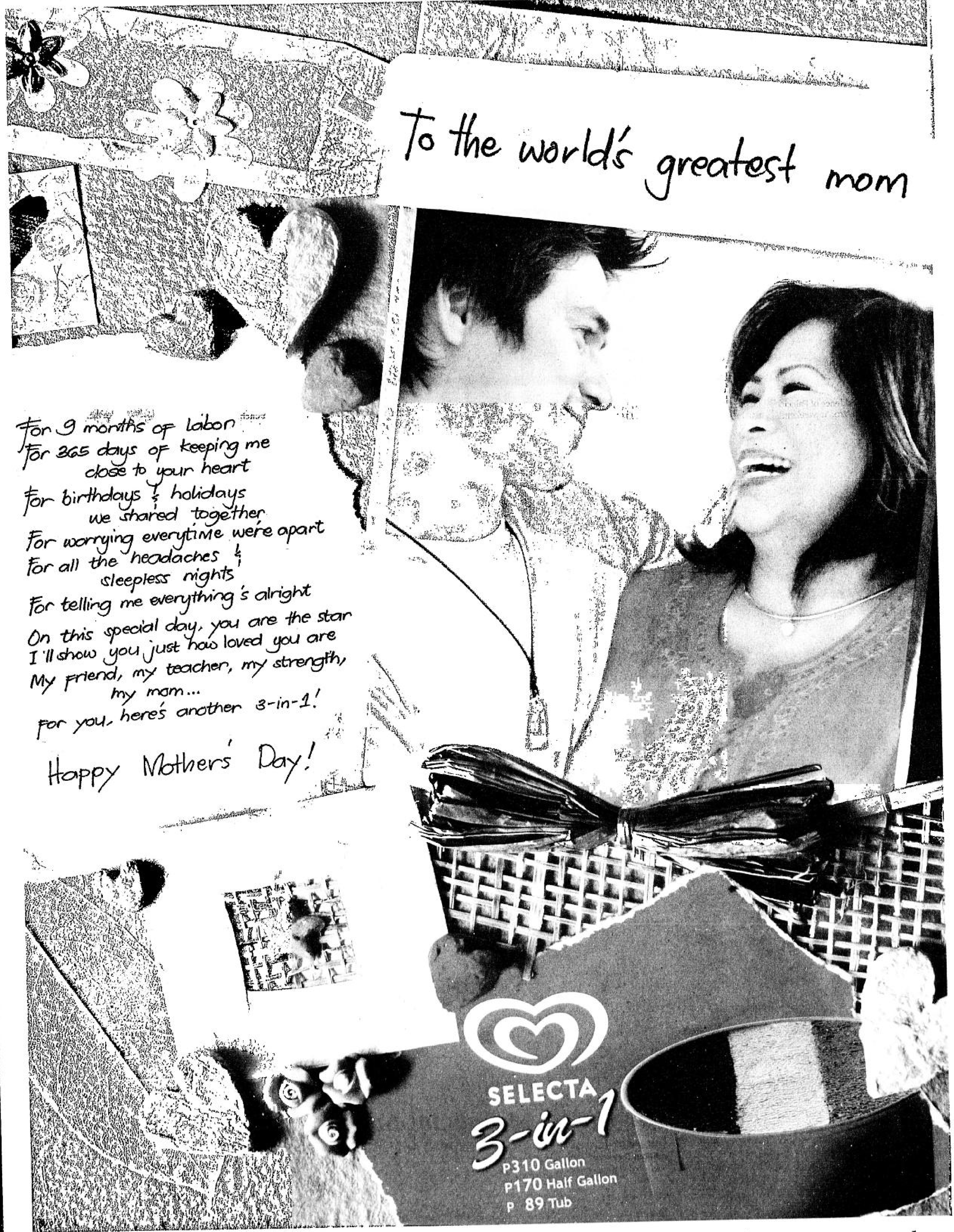

To the world's greatest mom

For 9 months of labor
For 365 days of keeping me
close to your heart
For birthdays & holidays
we shared together
For worrying everytime we're apart
For all the headaches &
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For telling me everything's alright
On this special day, you are the star
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My friend, my teacher, my strength,
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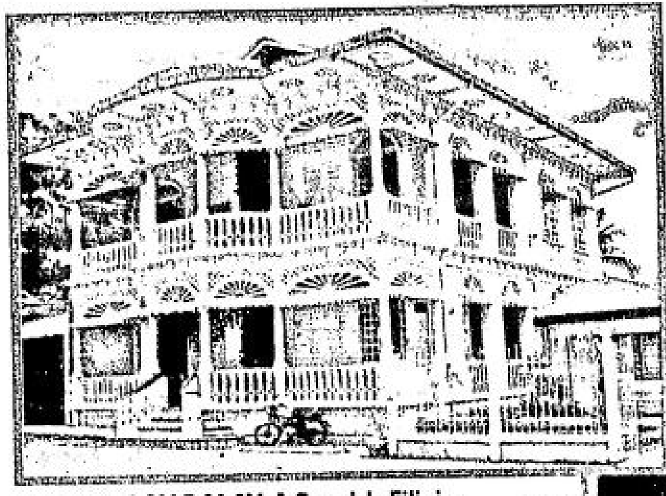
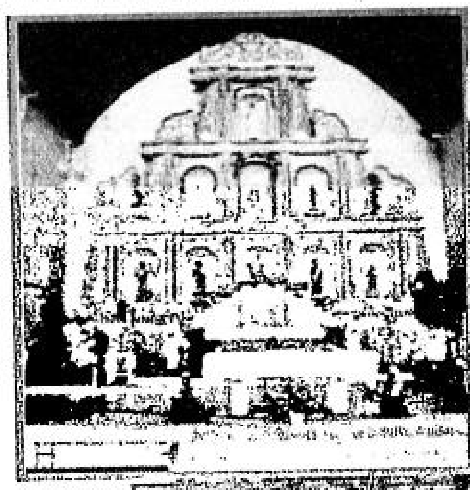


MI BALAY, SU BALAY. A Spanish-Filipino heritage home in Carcar

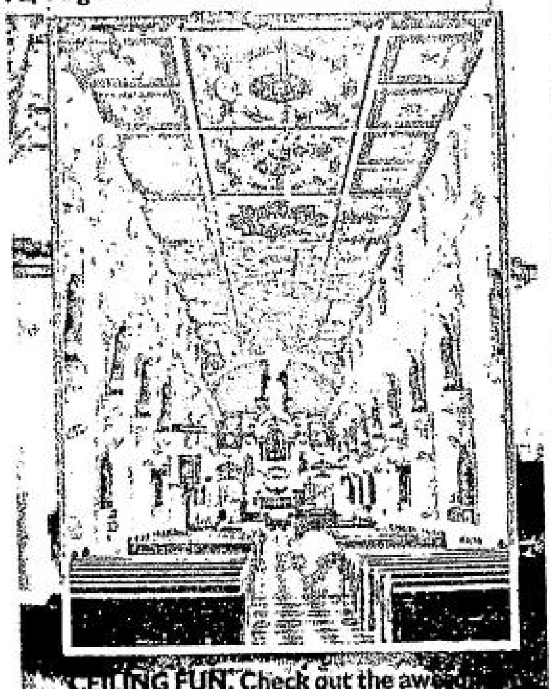
BEYOND VINTAGE. Don Ramon Sarmiento's Manor in Carcar is straight out of the 1800's

NICE BRICKS. The Boljoon Church is the oldest surviving stone church in Cebu

Rural Legends



OMG. The St. Michael Parish Church in Argao was constructed in 1734



CEILING FUN. Check out the awe ceiling art at the St. Catherine Church in Carcar

With Turismo Rural, travelers can now discover new places in The ´Pinas aside from the beaches

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

IF THERE'S MORE TO PINOY FOOD than adobo and *balut*, I guess there's also more—tons more—to the Philippines than haiku-worthy coastlines and trademark swaying palms. Shift your gaze beyond the white-sand-and-crystal-water clichés and you'll be rewarded with a greater visual encyclopedia: remote heritage towns, Byzantine-style churches, and other scenes worthy of an Amorsolo painting.

At least that's how the peeps of Turismo Rural want you to think. Conceived as a fascinating long-term project by leisure management experts, Turismo Rural hopes to hype "the places which promise the authenticity of local culture and history" for both residents and foreign visitors. Very National Geographic, *diba*?

Leading the charge is Ms Julie Alegrado-Vergara, president and CEO of Almont Holdings Inc., a group of resorts and city hotels that's doing startlingly well in Cebu and Butuan. Rich in creative curiosity and entrepreneurial ingenuity, her plan is to makeover unused ancestral homes into graceful bed and breakfasts, collectively called Casa Rural. This mission draws the link between the old and the new, acting as a door to the world for countryside communities that may have been asleep for eons. Eureka much? Yup! Julie says that Turismo Rural is an eye-opener even for those who've lived in Cebu for decades.

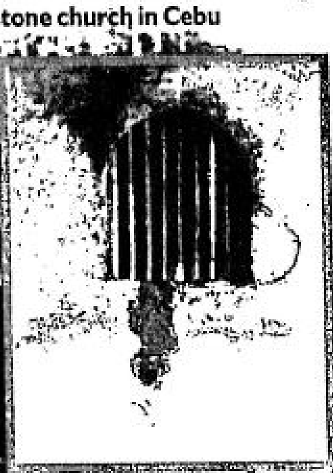
And instead of fighting the globalist spirit of the times with a stubbornly localist view, why not merge the two? With backing from the provincial government of Cebu and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), this group is initially using Cebu's southern coast in the experiment, applying the template to other Pinoy towns in the future.

Taking off from what Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia (yes, a vowel less she would've been Gwen Garci) calls *suroy suroy*, Cebuano for leisurely wandering, my trusty camera and I bounced around the different spots, stopping occasionally to muse at The Cebu's *mestizaje* landscape.

'Suroy suroy' time!

So it was bye-bye Maribago Bluewater Beach Resort (my temporary home base in Mactan), hello fascinating historical relics! My first stop was Don Ramon Sarmiento's Manor in Carcar. Built in the 1800's, this

RURAL/ D2



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KAFE KULTURE. The menu at Alex Kafé in Argao

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Losing myself to Motherhood

By Lexi Schulze

I AM A WOMAN OF THE NEW millennium, and proud of it. I do not conform. I push the envelope. I am forward-thinking.

So when I got pregnant over a year ago, I never believed it when the women in my life told me: "Get ready to lose yourself. Motherhood will change you." Unsolicited advice from those who've been there and done it all. Although I appreciated their concern, I took their babble with a grain of salt.

My life will not change. I'm one of those people like Michelle Pfeiffer in One Fine Day who has all her balls in the air thanks to a superb juggling act. She's at the top of her game with a child in tow. The feminist movement afforded people like me the right to have a career and be the best mom I possibly can **without losing myself.**

From the frying pan into the family pyre

I never cared to fit any mold. I guess this is why it took me a while to actually succumb to the whole reality of marriage and the stereotype that came along with it. When I hit that proverbial fork (more like tong) in the road, it was either dive into wedded bliss or continue on the circular social path with no real direction.

Two weddings (this is a whole other article) and seven months later, I realized that my life was never meant to be cookie-cutter.

My married life was not that of a tender wife eagerly awaiting her husband's return home from work with a warm plate of food and a chilled glass of white wine to satisfy him. As a very pregnant (sperm met egg three weeks after our Catholic ceremony) editor in chief of a celebrity magazine, I would come home later than the man, plop onto the couch, eat my ultra-nutritious dinner (I was a very conscientious pregnant lady) prepared by our capable cook and doze off right after. In a way, I guess I had seven months of a very routinary life.

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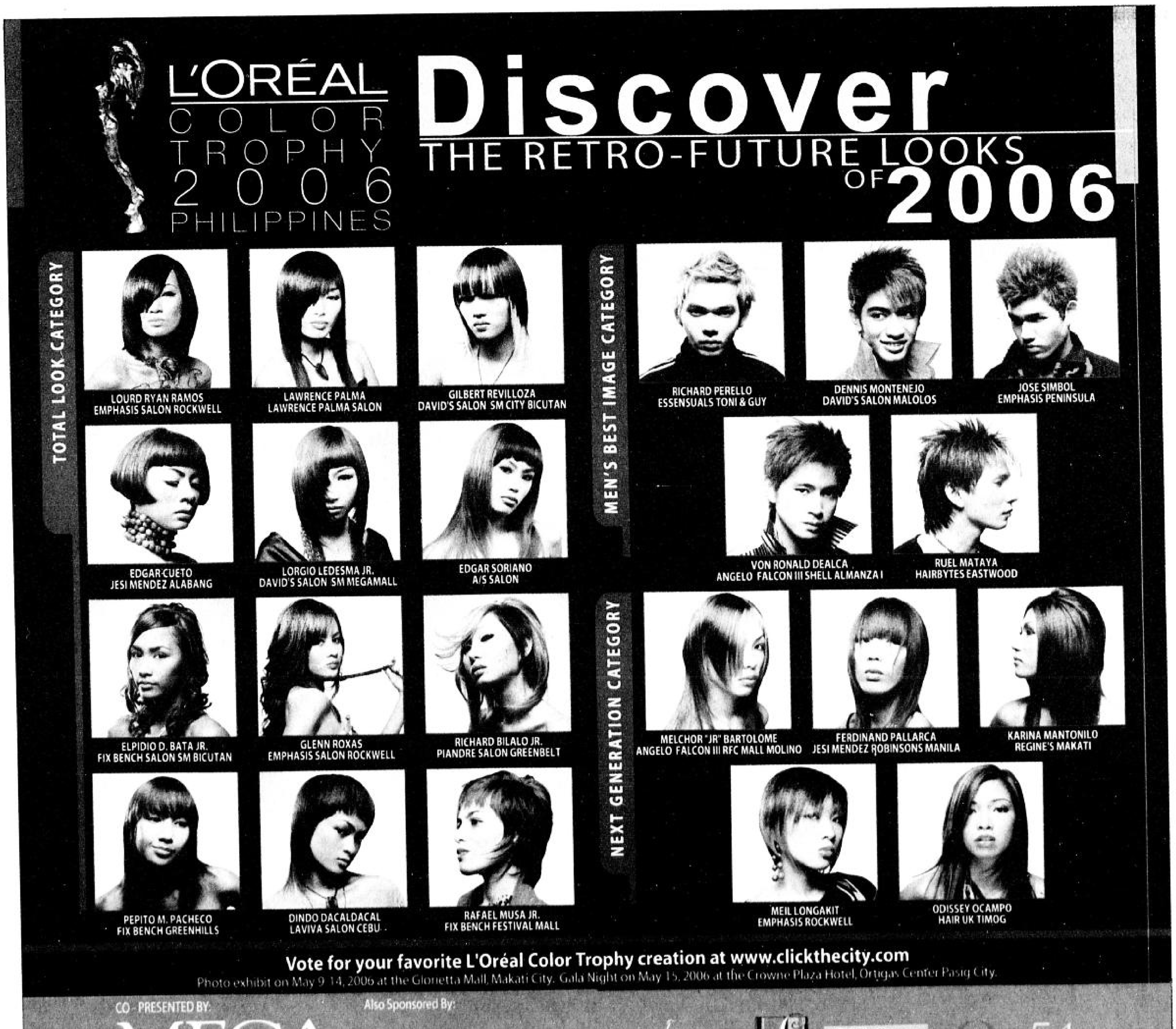

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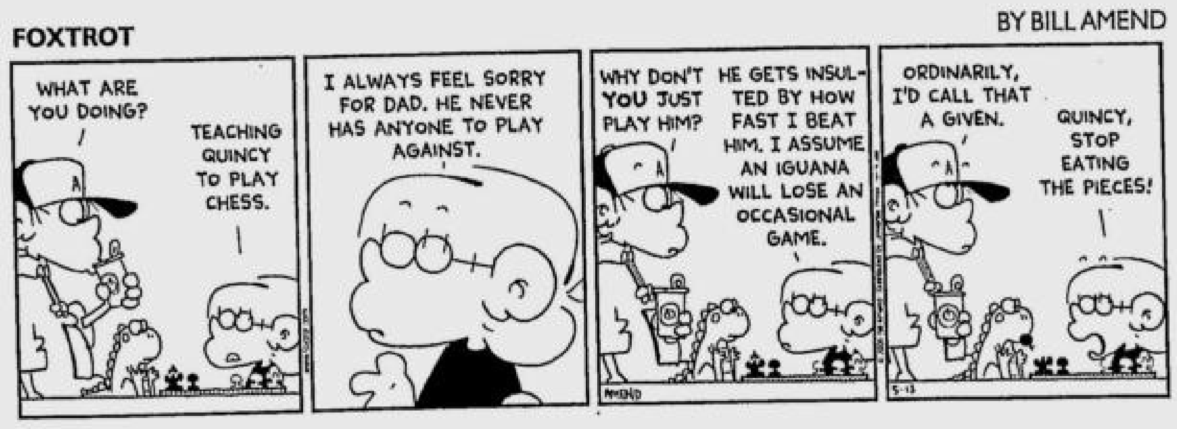
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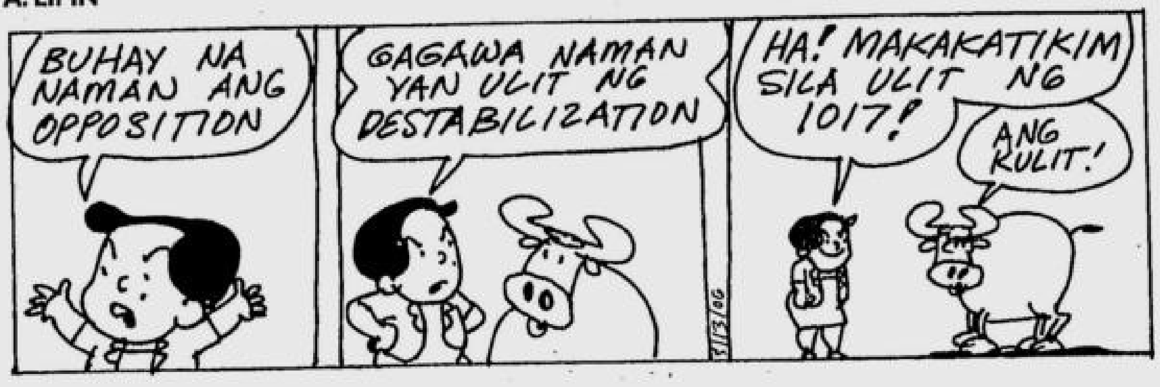
ORDINARILY, I'D CALL THAT A GIVEN.
QUINCY, STOP EATING THE PIECES!
AMEND
5-13

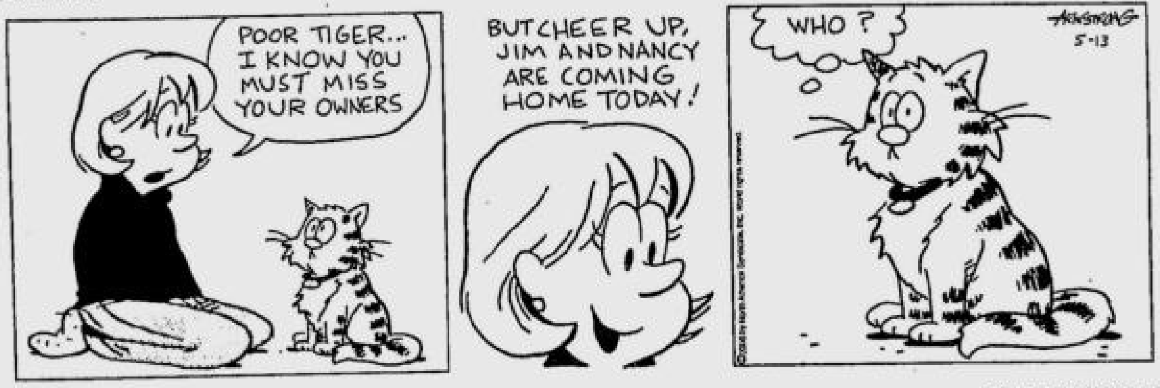
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BUHAY NA NAMAN ANG OPPOSITION
GAGAWA NAMAN YAN ULIT NG DESTABILIZATION
HA! MAKAKATIKIM SILA ULIT NG 1017!
ANG KULIT!
5/13/06

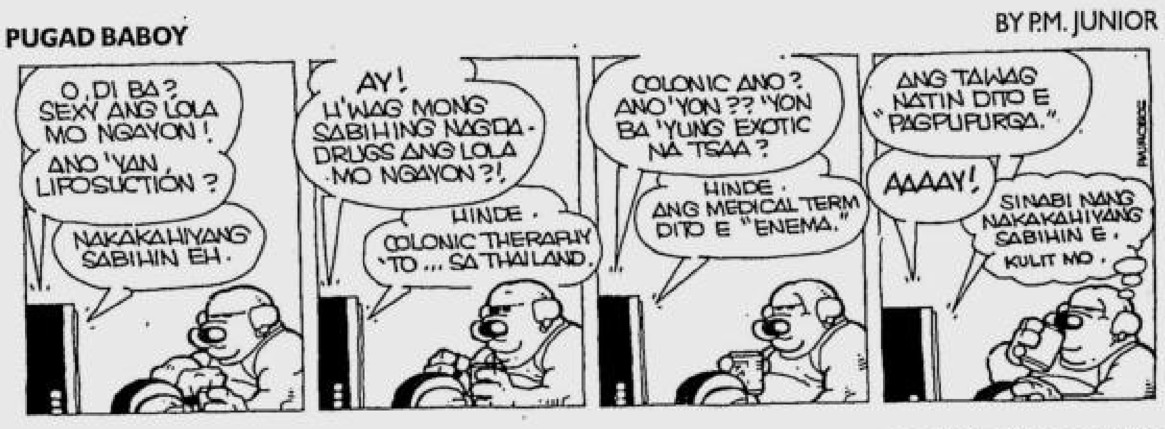
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


POOR TIGER... I KNOW YOU MUST MISS YOUR OWNERS
BUT CHEER UP, JIM AND NANCY ARE COMING HOME TODAY!
WHO?
ARMSTRONG 5-13

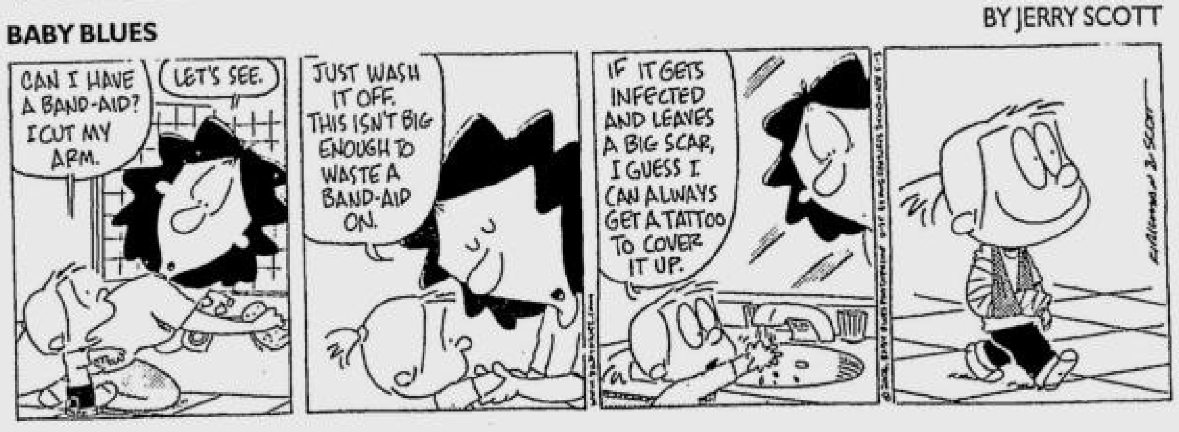
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O, DI BA? SEXY ANG LOLA MO NGAYON!
ANO 'YAN, LIPOSUCTION?
NAKAKAHIYANG SABIHIN EH.
AY! H'WAG MONG SABIHING NAGDA-DRUGS ANG LOLA MO NGAYON?!
HINDE. COLONIC THERAPHY 'TO ... SA THAILAND.
COLONIC ANO? ANO 'YON?? 'YON BA 'YUNG EXOTIC NA TSAA?
HINDE. ANG MEDICAL TERM DITO E "ENEMA."
ANG TAWAG NATIN DITO E "PAGPUPURGA."
AAAAY!
SINABI NANG NAKAKAHIYANG SABIHIN E. KULIT MO.

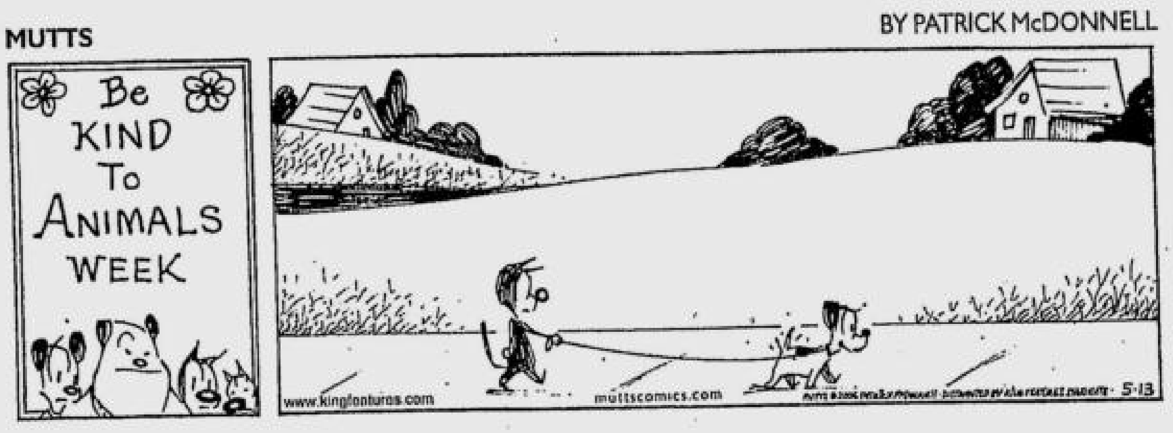
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN I HAVE A BAND-AID? I CUT MY ARM.
LET'S SEE.
JUST WASH IT OFF. THIS ISN'T BIG ENOUGH TO WASTE A BAND-AID ON.
IF IT GETS INFECTED AND LEAVES A BIG SCAR, I GUESS I CAN ALWAYS GET A TATTOO TO COVER IT UP.

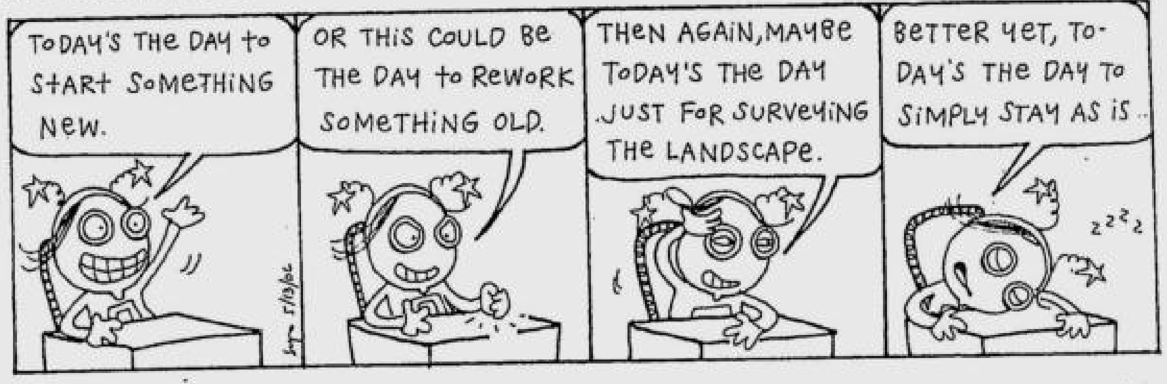
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Be KIND To ANIMALS WEEK
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
5-13

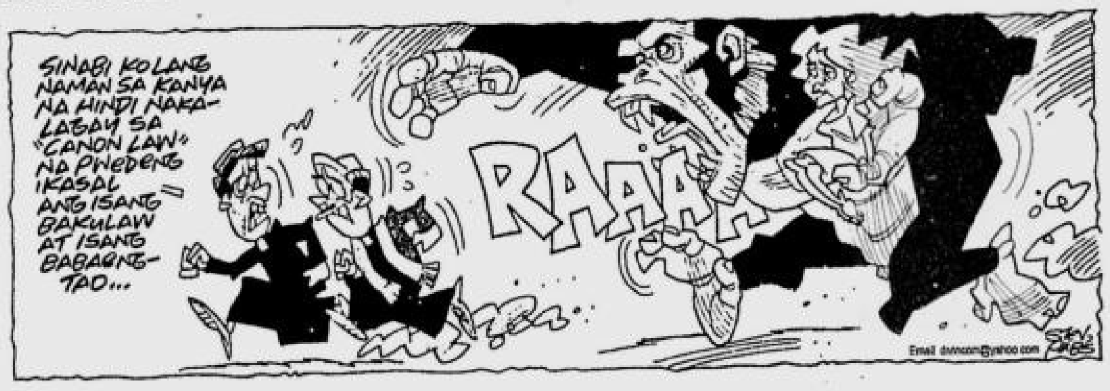
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


TODAY'S THE DAY to START SOMETHING NEW.
OR THIS COULD BE THE DAY to REWORK SOMETHING OLD.
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE TODAY'S THE DAY JUST FOR SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE.
BETTER YET, TODAY'S THE DAY TO SIMPLY STAY AS IS...
zzzz
5/13/06

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SINABI KO LANG NAMAN SA KANYA NA HINDI NAKALAGAY SA "CANON LAW" NA PWEDENG IKASAL ANG ISANG BAKULAW AT ISANG BABAENG-TAO...
RAAAA!
Email dvncom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Whether you seek to or not, you influence others. You do this in business, in the arts, in your technique and in your personal life. You like to be active; you like to learn; and you need to travel! To others you appear playful and freedom-loving. Expect a fabulous year ahead. It could be one of the best years of your life!
Birthdate of: Harvey Keitel, actor; Beatrice Arthur, actress; Stevie Wonder, singer/composer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're gung-ho to spend money today or to do a business deal. You're confident you can handle your finances to profit and please you. (You probably can.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your communication skills are fantastic today. You can convince, teach or sell anything to anyone! Don't hold back. You've got the Midas touch.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're very energized today! You're keen to learn something new. You're also willing to research or dig deep for anything you want to know more about.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with others are lively! Somebody might provoke you in some way. Alternatively, you might want to convince people of something. If so, you'll succeed!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is the day to persuade VIPs, bosses and parents to agree with your plans (whatever they are). Strike while the iron is hot. You're a gifted speaker today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a great day to study, travel or present your plans to others. You're enthusiastic about things, and you believe in your ideas. (A good idea always sells itself.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You stand to benefit from the wealth of others today. People might give you favors, gifts and goodies, or let you use what they own. Yay!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with partners and friends are extremely successful today. Other people are energetic, and so are you! Words fly, and things get done.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You can accomplish a lot at work today. You might also come up with wonderful ideas to improve your health. You're enthusiastic about something in your personal life. (Wow.)

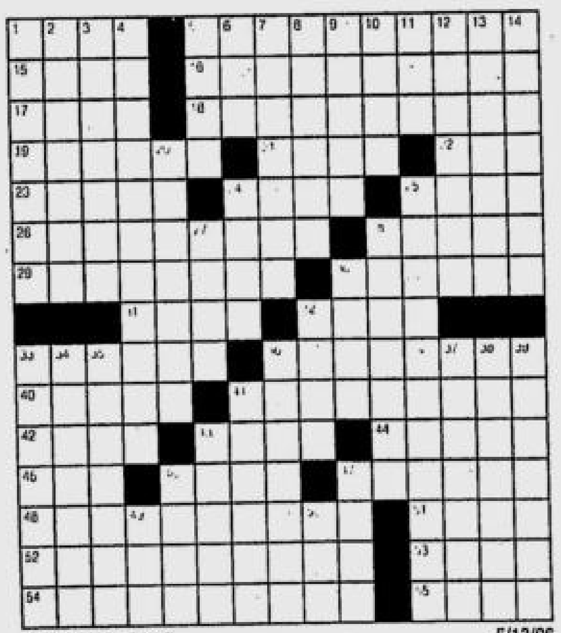
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is marvelous day to play or to take a chance on something. You want to party. You're keen on romance. Playful activities with children are rewarding and fun.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is the day to wrap up any kind of real estate deal you might be interested in. It's also a good day to buy anything for your home or to make home repairs. Family discussions are lively.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your enthusiasm will carry you through whatever you do today. You're energized, ready for anything and willing to talk to others. Conversations with siblings will be productive.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Heroin, to addicts
5 Occurs
15 "Drowning __"
16 Noble Italian musical style
17 Hebrew month
18 Comics' superhero group
19 Tell
21 Shooter's ammo
22 Turkish title
23 Big name in mini motor homes
24 Witty remark
25 Long ride?
26 Mr. Humperdinck
28 Nutty pie
29 Dinner enders
30 John Travolta musical
31 Tropical cuckoos
32 Spur on
33 Willowy
36 Cyrano de
40 Stacks
41 Mask
42 Commotions
43 Shoppe sign word
44 Original
45 Strike sharply
46 "Promised Land" author Abba
47 Revolve
48 Voters
51 Conscious selves
52 Wizard
53 Mailed
54 Some Manhattanites
55 Woods rooter?



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL
5/13/06

DOWN
1 Felt the pinch
2 Opium derivative
3 Digital alternatives
4 Junk vending events?
5 Lug
6 Go __ (freak out)
7 What finders are
8 Actor Borgnine
9 Pulled up a chair to
10 Trident-shaped letters
11 Allow to
12 Coffee bean variety
13 Movie theaters
14 No-brainer
20 Knacks
24 New York team
25 Radio news pioneer
27 Soft, French cheese
28 Offspring
30 Sounds from the pound
32 Legendary soccer player
33 Enough!
34 Large sweet onion
35 Runaway brides
36 Shady reputation
37 Pillager
38 Organic solvent
39 Holm of "All about Eve"
41 Burst into flames
43 Ancient Greek coins
46 Customary extras, briefly
47 Roman patrilineal clan
49 Singer Stevens
50 Long-time seafarer

Friday's Puzzle Solved

A	T	L	A	S		W	E	B	B	S		A	H	A
D	A	I	S	Y		E	L	R	O	Y		L	A	B
D	R	E	S	S	E	S	D	O	W	N		T	G	I
S	F	D	A	T	E			T	E	E	T	H	E	D
			M	E	N	S	C	H			H	O	N	E
L	S	I		M	Y	T	H		O	H	E			
O	T	I	S			E	A	T	N	O	M	E	A	T
S	O	C	K	S	I	N	T	H	E	M	O	U	T	H
T	A	K	E	A	V	O	T	E			B	R	A	E
			T	O	Y		E	D	A	M		O	D	E
T	A	L	C			A	R	A	B	I	A			
I	N	A	H	E	A	P			U	N	W	E	L	L
A	N	D		S	U	I	T	S	T	O	A	T	E	E
R	E	I		P	R	A	N	K		R	I	N	N	A
A	X	E		Y	A	N	N	I		S	T	A	T	S

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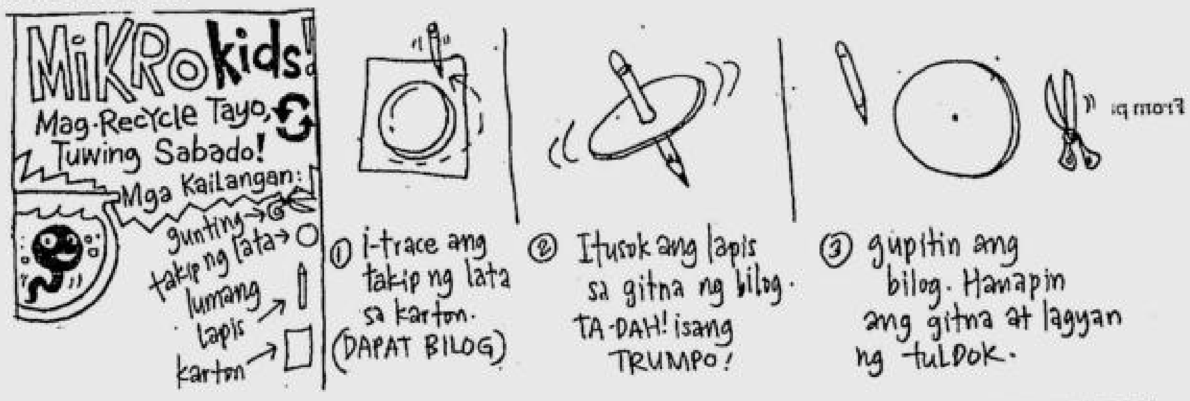
5/13/06

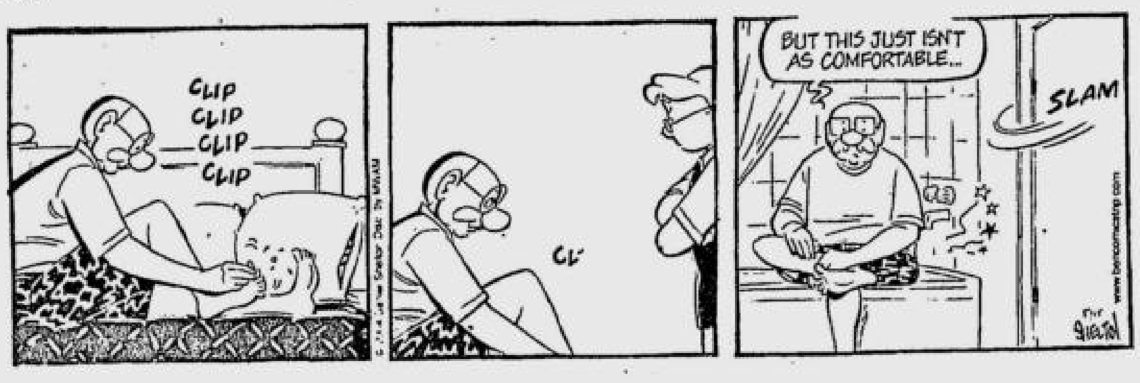
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRO kids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
gunting
takip ng lata
lumang lapis
karton
① i-trace ang takip ng lata sa karton. (DAPAT BILOG)
② Itusok ang lapis sa gitna ng bilog. TA-DAH! isang TRUMPO!
③ gupitin ang bilog. Hanapin ang gitna at lagyan ng tuldok.

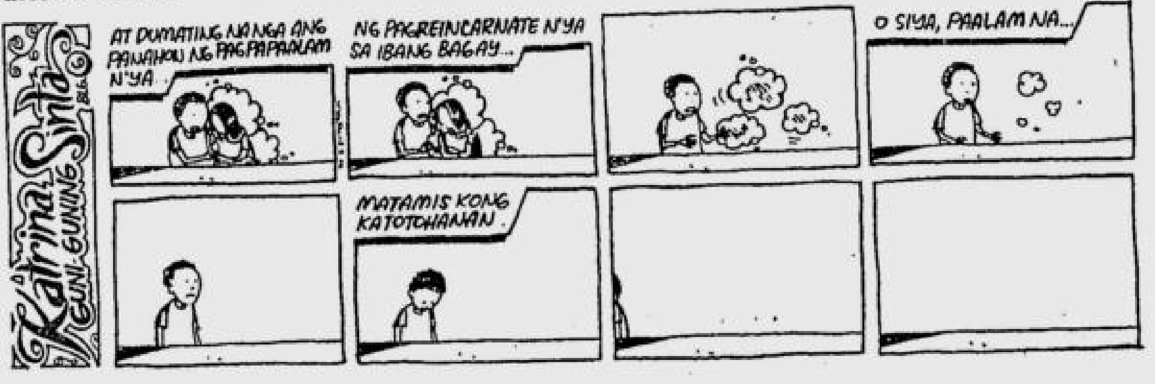
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


CLIP
CLIP
CLIP
CLIP
CL
BUT THIS JUST ISN'T AS COMFORTABLE...
SLAM
www.bencomicstrip.com

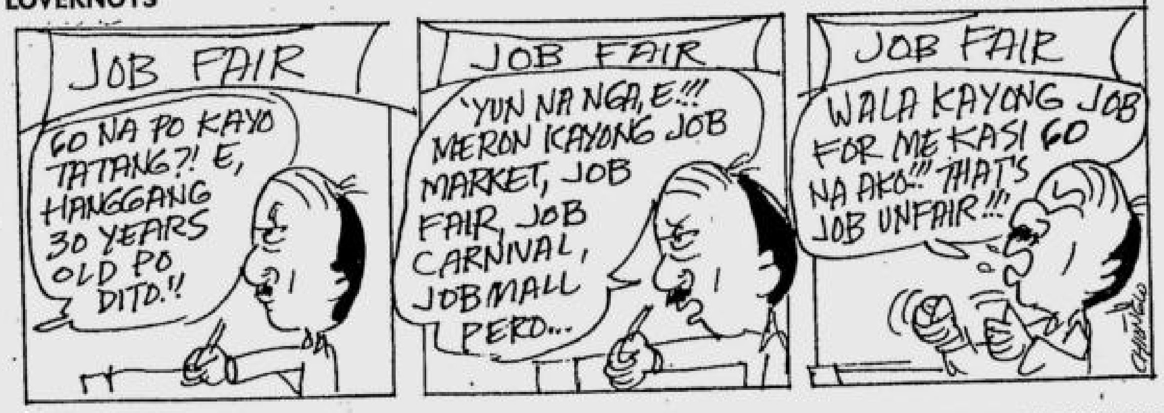
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


Katrina Sinta GUNI-GUNING 2006
AT DUMATING NA NGA ANG PANAHON NG PAGPAPAALAM N'YA
NG PAGREINCARNATE N'YA SA IBANG BAGAY...
O SIYA, PAALAM NA...
MATAMIS KONG KATOTOHANAN.

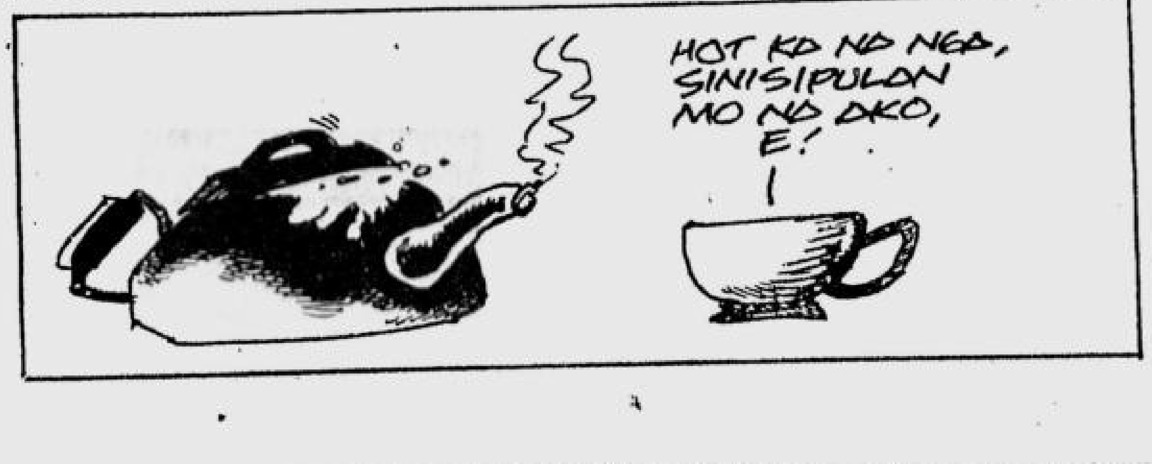
LOVEKNOTS

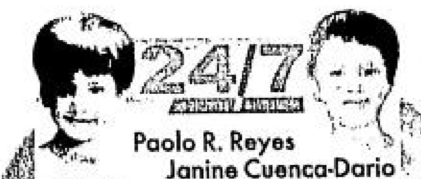
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOB FAIR
GO NA PO KAYO TATANG?! E, HANGGANG 30 YEARS OLD PO DITO.!!
JOB FAIR
'YUN NA NGA, E!!! MERON KAYONG JOB MARKET, JOB FAIR, JOB CARNIVAL, JOBMALL PERO...
JOB FAIR
WALA KAYONG JOB FOR ME KASI 60 NA AKO!!! THAT'S JOB UNFAIR!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HOT KA NA NGA, SINISIPULAN MO NA AKO, E!



Spread the Love

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

IN THE WILD WORLD OF ELECTRONIC dance parties, few pack the punch the way party pioneer NBK does. They proudly hold up the trophy for successfully devirginizing our sexy, sunny archipelago with everyone from Van Dyk to Digweed, Sasha, Steve Lawler and Ferry Corsten. A brag-worthy feat that put the Philippines on every clubber's map; turning Manila into a pleasurable pit-stop for all sorts of globe-trekking spinlords.

Tonight, for up to six hours of rip-roaring fun, NBK spreads some summer love in their fantasmagoric monthly fiesta, "For the Love of House." From 10 p.m. onwards, DJ Manolet Dario and the NBK house heroes Antz Santiago, David Jacob (now based in Hong Kong), Jed Dario, Jon Naval, Marc Naval, Paolo Maralit, and Raji Mata cook up a skinny rumble at the newly-refurbished interiors of the Embassy Super Club [The Fort, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, phone: 816-4195], which finally reopened last Tuesday after a month-long facelift.

Joining them at the decks is the UK-based, Brisbane-born turntablist, Kristian Hernandez (www.kristianhernandez.com), a two-time winner of the Australian DMC Championships. The trailblazing 27-year-old, who is one of the most sought after DJs in the land Down Under, is now making his mark in the hallowed haunts of metropolitan London.

In a 2003 interview with WorldDJ.com, a popular online clubbing magazine, Hernandez (otherwise known as Audio K) was asked to name his favorite gig of all time. His answer: "It was on a tropical island in the Philippines. They were celebrating their Holy Week and basically there were 2,000 people dancing in the water." Eat your heart out, Ibiza!

Other Super! 24/7 events:

May 13, Saturday

Fra Lippo Lippi:Live! at Araneta Coliseum; CircuitAsia's Players feat. DJ John DeAgo at Government; Drip, Sound, and Milagros Dancehall Collective at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Rivermaya at CCP; Project Mayhem at Conspiracy; Bituin Escalante at Onstage Greenbelt; Outerhope, Sun Valley Crew, The Late Isabel, Nyko Maca, and Playphonics at Saguijo; Pump Saturdays at Jill's; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Bliss & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur; Massive Saturdays at Bed. (Update: URCC VIII will be held at the San Juan Coliseum on May 20 instead. Call 911-5555.)

May 14, Sunday

Paul Anka: Live! at Araneta Coliseum; Sean Paul: Live in Cebu! at Waterfront Cebu; Youth Night '06 w/ Mojofly at Sta. Cruz Makati; Ilonggo Culinary Festival at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Noon at Ngayon Photo Exhibit at Filipinas Heritage Library

May 15, Monday

Jimmy Bondoc at the Breakfast Club, Paul Anka: Live! at Araneta Coliseum; Monkeyspank and Severo at Mag:net Café; Ethan band at Temple; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ Ro at Gweilos Makati; Gary Granada at Conspiracy; Teresa Avila at The Tivoli; Dawn & Jessie at Merk's; Wine Buffet at The Lounge; Eastwind Jazz Trio at Captain's Bar; Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah

May 16, Tuesday

The relaunch of Panic! w/ DJ Alessandra Tinio at Zen; Monsterbot, Boy Elroy, Wild Mood Swings and Death by Tampon at Saguijo; Nyko Maca at 70s Bistro; Ilonggo Culinary Festival at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Salsa Night w/ Salsa Filipinas at Mezze; Cooky Chua at Conspiracy; Kickback Tuesdays at Manila DJ Club; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Acoustic Night at Temple; Spirit of '67 at Captain's Bar

May 17, Wednesday

Rivermaya at Café Lupe; Mojofly at Capone's; Nyko Maca at Mag:Net Café Katipunan; Smooth Wednesdays w/ DJ Steve Mills at Absinth; Weekend Wednesdays w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Strumm's; Spy, Alak Pa, Wahijuara, and Rinka at Saguijo; Discotech w/ DJ Papi Santos at Mezze; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Funksouljah at Manila DJ Club; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Willy Wanka's Music Factory w/ Joffy Cruz at Gweilos Makati; Hustle & Flow w/ DJ Crash at Temple; DJ Brit at Government; Noel Cabangon at Conspiracy; Acoustic Night at 6Underground; Way Back Wednesdays at Bed; Julia Duncan at Merk's

May 18, Thursday

Akafellas at the Breakfast Club, BBC's HotButteredSoul w/ DJ Mike Constantino at Sake Lab; Radioactive Sago Project at The Fort Plaza; Savannah Lumen at the Entertainment Arts Studio's Concert Hall, Jupiter St., Makati; GottaHaveHouse! w/ DJs Mark Jentes & Wendell Garcia at Capone's; G Lounge at Mezze; Stonefree, Pupil, 6 Cycle Mind, Spongecola, Rugis, and Dicta License at Saguijo; "Jam for the Rights of Children" at Conspiracy; SPIT at Mag:Net Café; Fluxxe! Whatever Thursdays at Manila DJ Club; Supahstar DJ Thursdaze at Bed; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Acoustic Jive at Merk's

May 19, Friday

Music Jam w/ Kjwan at G-Strip Parking Lot, Greenhills; Kitchie Nadal & Barbie Almalbis at Araneta Coliseum; Teardrop, Maryzark, Kala, Angulo, Deliquentres, and Neruda at Saguijo; Radioactive Sago Project at Rockwell; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Benjo Marquez at Mezze; Bridge at Conspiracy; DJs Karl Ty & GP Reyes at Citrus; DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; HouseBeats at Mati; MyHOUSE at M Café; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; DJ Brit at Government; Jive Fridays at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; Gogo Fridays at Bed; Route 70 at Merk's; DJs Scratchmark & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2949 (Globe) and 209 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com.

Losing myself to motherhood

From page E1

Wedded bliss? Not so much. It was very hard to focus on our couplehood when there was a third entity that filled my thoughts day in and day out. Was I eating right? Did I ingest too much pollution today to poison the child? Did I overexert myself physically? Would my baby feel my tears or hear my cries of frustration and self-doubt?

Without my knowing it, I was being consumed by motherhood. It became a top priority—heck, it became **my life**—without my stamp of admittance. I was still editing my magazine. I was still sharing a house with the man I chose to marry. I was still daughter-sister-friend-coworker. Juggled balls in the air.

I guess I was consumed because I wanted to go about motherhood the right way from the get-go. My quest for perfection spilled over to this new and exciting venture. And like any new "project," attention shifts.

Yet, with this unconscious yet highly obvious focus on my impending motherhood, I was still out to prove that I had not changed, that I was still the same strong-willed, passionate-about-life, go-getter who would stop at nothing to achieve the perfect balance of everything.

And no matter how determined I was to be a selfless mom, I wasn't going to be the sacrificial lamb.

I would not lose myself.

What to expect when you're deflecting (criticism) ...

This "New Age Mom" movement of mine took on a life of its own as not many of the elders in my tribe could understand why I put so much thought into the pregnancy. I avoided mercury-infested fish and stayed away from potential bacteria-carrying salad and soft cheese (much to my dismay—I am the ultimate cheese whore). I refused to ingest an ounce of caffeine even if **the book** told me it was all right to do so (why start the kid out in overdrive?!). Alcohol was completely out of the question for me, even though a glass of wine was allowed as a de-stresser (Lord knows I have many a friend who took this rule and went to town with it…a glass of red became three, then seven….).

Personally, I felt that all these rules were there for a reason, and they needed to be followed. I got many an eye roll for being such a prissy pregger. "Why are you so picky? We ate everything when we were pregnant with you guys. You know, we even had shots of whiskey to relax us and cure colds back then! You can eat any fish you want, mercury-schmercury. And you're not going to tell me to stop smoking in front of you… all my kids are fine and I was a chimney when I was pregnant with them. You're such an Exagerada!"

Uh, maybe that's why my generation is so f*%ked up, you mercury-taking, bacteria-swallowing, nicotine-infested, alcohol-swigging caffeine junkie! (Okay, those were extreme hormones talking at the time.) Seriously though, the older generation does not take into consideration the degenerative nature of the environment we are now faced with.

And what particularly killed me every time was when I was warned against reading too much about pregnancy. "Don't believe everything in those books that you read now… they just make you think too much." Could it be? Parental figures discouraging reading?! Of course I should take their word over the PhDs and MDs who have studied extensively—and continue to do so—to put all their qualitative research down in a book to help confuse all new mothers such like myself… shame on them!

Of course I read the damn book. I didn't even bother to go against the gradient by boycotting something as cliché as "What To Expect When You're Expecting." **The book** was just as much a Bible for me as it was to anyone who used it before me, and it will be such a comfort to those who will be pregnant after me. (And unless you're part marsupial and are carrying in a pouch, you'll have to trust me on this. **The book** will answer any standard question you may have the exact time you have it. Quite freaky.)

But as life loves to go off-tangent every so often to shake things up, there are truly some things you can't find answers to in any book. Thinking all was going smoothly just as **the book** was promising, I felt completely betrayed when I was told by my gynecologist during my seventh month visit that there was a major problem…

Premature emancipation

I think it's safe to assume that anyone after nine grueling months of carrying Pilates ball gets excited at the prospect of finally releasing the child from the womb. Apart from having your body back for yourself and yourself alone, you're appeased by the fact that you've done your part in nourishing that life who rented a space inside you.

I can assure you that I felt no such thing when I delivered my 28-week-old at a pound and a half. With over two months left in her lease, my daughter was ready to take on the world with guns blazing despite her fragile start.

Quite ironic that things went down this way. I was, in my mind, one of the healthiest pregnant women around. I was in control. I was militant, but maybe to a fault in hindsight. What did I do wrong? When did my body stop nourishing this child? How could it have happened to me… who seemed to have all her balls moving freely from one hand to the other in a juggling act so intricate the Cirque de Soleil would have been impressed?!

I must admit that there were pockets of scenarios with "I Told You So" in my head. I could almost imagine the elders chattering amongst themselves, "You see what happens? She was probably not getting enough nutrients with all the fish and cheese she was excluding from her diet! And maybe she was too stressed that she could've used a glass of wine to calm her down. I tell you, these kids today… they just don't listen."

Thank goodness I had no time to focus on the "What Ifs." I had a daughter in an incubator at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that needed me to be strong for her. I did not want her to feel me. Pain. Anger. Disappointment. Self-loathing. Extreme sadness. I had to pull it together for this life I swore to protect with everything I had.

I had to lose myself.

When the heart breaks, the ego will fall

So much for juggling all the balls in the air. Just like Michelle Pfeiffer in "One Fine Day," her balls ego came crashing down as she finally gave in and asked George Clooney for some help with her kid. And I wish I could say that the same SOS. was offered to me, but I needed something different. I needed to freeze frame and catch the one ball that mattered above all else: My child.

Although it's standard to have three months off with a caesarian section (all my Lamaze classes out the window… I was so arrogant to think I couldn't get through this without drugs!), it wouldn't cover the amount of time needed for my kind of recovery. Health-wise, I was a complete trooper—walking around and passing gas (a must after a C-Sec, I had nurses coming in asking how the wind was blowing in the buttocks area) hours after the operation.

But I was far from healed. Apart from having to see my frail child who weighed less than two sticks of butter get poked and prodded for IV lines, blood transfusions and feeding tubes, I had the rest of my life waiting in the wings for me to pay it the slightest bit of attention.

In my semi-feminist mind, there was always this set equation for perfection: **motherhood + career = the perfect woman**, in equal amounts. I tried to satisfy this mathematical balance by going back to work a month before my leave was up. Since my child was stable and in the very capable of our neonatologist, residents and nurses (a bunch I will always be indebted to—they just don't know how much their work meant to me) day in and day out, I decided to give my sanity a boost by going to the office and getting back into the groove of things as I would soon bring my baby home… and everything in my life would finally be in place again.

I now know what an out-of-body experience feels like. I was physically in the office, but I was 100 percent back at the hospital in my mind and heart, holding my child's tiny hand through the incubator door while reading "The Cat in the Hat."

A month after that, I waved an official goodbye to my editorship and hello to the mothership.

I lost myself.

Postpartum impression

Not to say that I would've kept the job had things gone differently. Sure, my preemie needed extra attention when I brought her home… but only until she settled into the normalcy she was diagnosed to have anyway. A good 21 percent of births in the United States are of the premature kind, and the survival rate of anyone born over 28 weeks is a strong 80 percent (and girls vs boys fair even better as they develop faster physiologically … **a medical fact, guys.** Don't shoot the messenger.)

Even with a well baby in tow, I chose a path a never thought I would in a million feminist years: to drop my career for now and give myself time to perfect myself as mom to my beautiful child.

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Spread the Love

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

IN THE WILD WORLD OF ELECTRONIC dance parties, few pack the punch the way party pioneer NBK does. They proudly hold up the trophy for successfully devirginizing our sexy, sunny archipelago with everyone from Van Dyk to Digweed, Sasha, Steve Lawler and Ferry Corsten. A brag-worthy feat that put the Philippines on every clubber's map; turning Manila into a pleasurable pit-stop for all sorts of globe-trekking spinlords.

Tonight, for up to six hours of rip-roaring fun, NBK spreads some summer love in their fantasmagoric monthly fiesta, "For the Love of House." From 10 p.m. onwards, DJ Manolet Dario and the NBK house heroes Antz Santiago, David Jacob (now based in Hong Kong), Jed Dario, Jon Naval, Marc Naval, Paolo Maralit, and Raji Mata cook up a skinny rumble at the newly-refurbished interiors of the Embassy Super Club [The Fort, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, phone: 816-4195], which finally reopened last Tuesday after a month-long facelift.

Joining them at the decks is the UK-based, Brisbane-born turntablist, Kristian Hernandez (www.kristianhernandez.com), a two-time winner of the Australian DMC Championships. The trailblazing 27-year-old, who is one of the most sought after DJs in the land Down Under, is now making his mark in the hallowed haunts of metropolitan London.

In a 2003 interview with WorldDJ.com, a popular online clubbing magazine, Hernandez (otherwise known as Audio K) was asked to name his favorite gig of all time. His answer: "It was on a tropical island in the Philippines. They were celebrating their Holy Week and basically there were 2,000 people dancing in the water." Eat your heart out, Ibiza!

Other Super! 24/7 events:

May 13, Saturday

Fra Lippo Lippi:Live! at Araneta Coliseum; CircuitAsia's Players feat. DJ John DeAgo at Government; Drip, Sound, and Milagros Dancehall Collective at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Rivermaya at CCP; Project Mayhem at Conspiracy; Bituin Escalante at Onstage Greenbelt; Outerhope, Sun Valley Crew, The Late Isabel, Nyko Maca, and Playphonics at Saguijo; Pump Saturdays at Jill's; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Bliss & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur; Massive Saturdays at Bed. (Update: URCC VIII will be held at the San Juan Coliseum on May 20 instead. Call 911-5555.)

May 14, Sunday

Paul Anka: Live! at Araneta Coliseum; Sean Paul: Live in Cebu! at Waterfront Cebu; Youth Night '06 w/ Mojofly at Sta. Cruz Makati; Ilonggo Culinary Festival at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Noon at Ngayon Photo Exhibit at Filipinas Heritage Library

May 15, Monday

Jimmy Bondoc at the Breakfast Club, Paul Anka: Live! at Araneta Coliseum; Monkeyspank and Severo at Mag:net Café; Ethan band at Temple; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ Ro at Gweilos Makati; Gary Granada at Conspiracy; Teresa Avila at The Tivoli; Dawn & Jessie at Merk's; Wine Buffet at The Lounge; Eastwind Jazz Trio at Captain's Bar: Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah

May 16, Tuesday

The relaunch of Panic! w/ DJ Alessandra Tinio at Zen; Monsterbot, Boy Elroy, Wild Mood Swings and Death by Tampon at Saguijo; Nyko Maca at 70s Bistro; Ilonggo Culinary Festival at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Salsa Night w/ Salsa Filipinas at Mezze; Cooky Chua at Conspiracy; Kickback Tuesdays at Manila DJ Club; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Acoustic Night at Temple; Spirit of '67 at Captain's Bar

May 17, Wednesday

Rivermaya at Café Lupe; Mojofly at Capone's; Nyko Maca at Mag:Net Café Katipunan; Smooth Wednesdays w/ DJ Steve Mills at Absinth; Weekend Wednesdays w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Strumm's; Spy, Alak Pa, Wahijuara, and Rinka at Saguijo; Discotech w/ DJ Papi Santos at Mezze; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Funksouljah at Manila DJ Club; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Willy Wanka's Music Factory w/ Joffy Cruz at Gweilos Makati; Hustle & Flow w/ DJ Crash at Temple; DJ Brit at Government; Noel Cabangon at Conspiracy; Acoustic Night at 6Underground; Way Back Wednesdays at Bed; Julia Duncan at Merk's

May 18, Thursday

Akafellas at the Breakfast Club, BBC's HotButteredSoul w/ DJ Mike Constantino at Sake Lab; Radioactive Sago Project at The Fort Plaza; Savannah Lumen at the Entertainment Arts Studio's Concert Hall, Jupiter St., Makati; GottaHaveHouse! w/ DJs Mark Jentes & Wendell Garcia at Capone's; G Lounge at Mezze; Stonefree, Pupil, 6 Cycle Mind, Spongecola, Rugis, and Dicta License at Saguijo; "Jam for the Rights of Children" at Conspiracy; SPIT at Mag:Net Café; Fluxxe; Whatever Thursdays at Manila DJ Club; Supahstar DJ Thursdaze at Bed; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Acoustic Jive at Merk's

May 19, Friday

Music Jam w/ Kjwan at G-Strip Parking Lot, Greenhills; Kitchie Nadal & Barbie Almalbis at Araneta Coliseum; Teardrop, Maryzark, Kala, Angulo, Deliquentres, and Neruda at Saguijo; Radioactive Sago Project at Rockwell; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Benjo Marquez at Mezze; Bridge at Conspiracy; DJs Karl Ty & GP Reyes at Citrus; DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; HouseBeats at Mati; MyHOUSE at M Café; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; DJ Brit at Government; Jive Fridays at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; Gogo Fridays at Bed; Route 70 at Merk's; DJs Scratchmark & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2949 (Globe) and 209 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com.

Losing myself to motherhood

From page E1

Wedded bliss? Not so much. It was very hard to focus on our couplehood when there was a third entity that filled my thoughts day in and day out. Was I eating right? Did I ingest too much pollution today to poison the child? Did I overexert myself physically? Would my baby feel my tears or hear my cries of frustration and self-doubt?

Without my knowing it, I was being consumed by motherhood. It became a top priority—heck, it became **my life**—without my stamp of admittance. I was still editing my magazine. I was still sharing a house with the man I chose to marry. I was still daughter-sister-friend-coworker. Juggled balls in the air.

I guess I was consumed because I wanted to go about motherhood the right way from the get-go. My quest for perfection spilled over to this new and exciting venture. And like any new "project," attention shifts.

Yet, with this unconscious yet highly obvious focus on my impending motherhood, I was still out to prove that I had not changed, that I was still the same strong-willed, passionate-about-life, go-getter who would stop at nothing to achieve the perfect balance of everything.

And no matter how determined I was to be a selfless mom, I wasn't going to be the sacrificial lamb.

I would not lose myself.

What to expect when you're deflecting (criticism) ...

This "New Age Mom" movement of mine took on a life of its own as not many of the elders in my tribe could understand why I put so much thought into the pregnancy. I avoided mercury-infested fish and stayed away from potential bacteria-carrying salad and soft cheese (much to my dismay—I am the ultimate cheese whore). I refused to ingest an ounce of caffeine even if the **book** told me it was all right to do so (why start the kid out in overdrive?!). Alcohol was completely out of the question for me, even though a glass of wine was allowed as a de-stresser (Lord knows I have many a friend who took this rule and went to town with it…a glass of red became three, then seven….).

Personally, I felt that all these rules were there for a reason, and they needed to be followed. I got many an eye roll for being such a prissy pregger. "Why are you so picky? We ate everything when we were pregnant with you guys. You know, we even had shots of whiskey to relax us and cure colds back then! You can eat any fish you want, mercury-schmercury. And you're not going to tell me to stop smoking in front of you… all my kids are fine and I was a chimney when I was pregnant with them. You're such an Exagerada!"

Uh, maybe that's why my generation is so f*%ked up, you mercury-taking, bacteria-swallowing, nicotine-infested, alcohol-swigging caffeine junkie! (Okay, those were extreme hormones talking at the time.) Seriously though, the older generation does not take into consideration the degenerative nature of the environment we are now faced with.

And what particularly killed me every time was when I was warned against reading too much about pregnancy. "Don't believe everything in those books that you read now… they just make you think too much." Could it be? Parental figures discouraging reading?! Of course I should take their word over the PhDs and MDs who have studied extensively—and continue to do so—to put all their qualitative research down in a book to help confuse all new mothers such like myself… shame on them!

Of course I read the damn book. I didn't even bother to go against the gradient by boycotting something as cliché as "What To Expect When You're Expecting." **The book** was just as much a Bible for me as it was to anyone who used it before me, and it will be such a comfort to those who will be pregnant after me. (And unless you're part marsupial and are carrying in a pouch, you'll have to trust me on this. The **book** will answer any standard question you may have the exact time you have it. Quite freaky.)

But as life loves to go off-tangent every so often to shake things up, there are truly some things you can't find answers to in any book. Thinking all was going smoothly just as the **book** was promising, I felt completely betrayed when I was told by my gynecologist during my seventh month visit that there was a major problem…

Premature emancipation

I think it's safe to assume that anyone after nine grueling months of carrying Pilates ball gets excited at the prospect of finally releasing the child from the womb. Apart from having your body back for yourself and yourself alone, you're appeased by the fact that you've done your part in nourishing that life who rented a space inside you.

I can assure you that I felt no such thing when I delivered my 28-week-old at a pound and a half. With over two months left in her lease, my daughter was ready to take on the world with guns blazing despite her fragile start.

Quite ironic that things went down this way. I was, in my mind, one of the healthiest pregnant women around. I was in control. I was militant, but maybe to a fault in hindsight. What did I do wrong? When did my body stop nourishing this child? How could it have happened to **me**… who seemed to have all her balls moving freely from one hand to the other in a juggling act so intricate the Cirque de Soleil would have been impressed?!

I must admit that there were pockets of scenarios with "I Told You So" in my head. I could almost imagine the elders chattering amongst themselves, "You see what happens? She was probably not getting enough nutrients with all the fish and cheese she was excluding from her diet! And maybe she was too stressed that she could've used a glass of wine to calm her down. I tell you, these kids today… they just don't listen."

Thank goodness I had no time to focus on the "What Ifs." I had a daughter in an incubator at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that needed me to be strong for her. I did not want her to feel me. Pain. Anger. Disappointment. Self-loathing. Extreme sadness. I had to pull it together for this life I swore to protect with everything I had.

I had to lose myself.

When the heart breaks, the ego will fall

So much for juggling all the balls in the air. Just like Michelle Pfeiffer in "One Fine Day," her balls ego came crashing down as she finally gave in and asked George Clooney for some help with her kid. And I wish I could say that the same SOS. was offered to me, but I needed something different. I needed to freeze frame and catch the one ball that mattered above all else: My child.

Although it's standard to have three months off with a caesarian section (all my Lamaze classes out the window… I was so arrogant to think I couldn't get through this without drugs!), it wouldn't cover the amount of time needed for my kind of recovery. Health-wise, I was a complete trooper—walking around and passing gas (a must after a C-Sec, I had nurses coming in asking how the wind was blowing in the buttocks area) hours after the operation.

But I was far from healed. Apart from having to see my frail child who weighed less than two sticks of butter get poked and prodded for IV lines, blood transfusions and feeding tubes, I had the rest of my life waiting in the wings for me to pay it the slightest bit of attention.

In my semi-feminist mind, there was always this set equation for perfection: **motherhood + career = the perfect woman**, in equal amounts. I tried to satisfy this mathematical balance by going back to work a month before my leave was up. Since my child was stable and in the very capable of our neonatologist, residents and nurses (a bunch I will always be indebted to—they just don't know how much their work meant to me) day in and day out, I decided to give my sanity a boost by going to the office and getting back into the groove of things as I would soon bring my baby home… and everything in my life would finally be in place again.

I now know what an out-of-body experience feels like. I was physically in the office, but I was 100 percent back at the hospital in my mind and heart, holding my child's tiny hand through the incubator door while reading "The Cat in the Hat."

A month after that, I waved an official goodbye to my editorship and hello to the mothership.

I lost myself.

Postpartum impression

Not to say that I would've kept the job had things gone differently. Sure, my preemie needed extra attention when I brought her home… but only until she settled into the normalcy she was diagnosed to have anyway. A good 21 percent of births in the United States are of the premature kind, and the survival rate of anyone born over 28 weeks is a strong 80 percent (and girls vs boys fair even better as they develop faster physiologically … **a medical fact, guys.** Don't shoot the messenger.)

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